Muslim Politics and Leadership in South Asia 1876–1892

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To the memory of my father

Muhammad Rahimullah Abbasi

Under the starlit sky,
His soft voice,
Unrolled moments,
As a reminiscence,
And cast a spell,
As I listened
In wide-eyed wonder,
And by my side, the stars
Bent down to see,
The past come to life.

—*The Author*

PREFACE

For some reason, little attention has been paid to a proper historical examination of Muslim politics in the South Asia during the 16 years spanning the period extending from 1876 to 1892. At best, this period has been studied as a backdrop to the Aligarh Movement, and all non-Aligarh politics got blurred in the broad sweep of that Movement. So far the focus of research and political emphasis has rested on Aligarh, and the story of political awakening in other provinces and the role of many a contemporary Muslim leader has been reduced to the level of a footnote or a passing reference. *A History of the Freedom Movement*, an official compilation, describes the Wahhabi and Faraizi Movements, and highlights the Aligarh Movement, but the role of leaders like Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali has been accorded no more than a few lines. The Muslim politics of Bengal, the Punjab, Bombay, Assam, Madras, Sind and the North West Frontier during these years finds no mention at all. This sector of our national effort has remained a political void. And as a result, the impression has arisen that the Aligarh elite gave the lead to the whole Muslim people of the subcontinent, and they all marched ahead under their banner. This picture is neither complete nor correct. *A History of the Freedom Movement* is symptomatic of the general trend in Pakistani historiography. Of course, there are a few scholars who do not subscribe to the prevalent trend, and as such I have no presumption to originality in dissent. However, I have attempted to portray the picture of Muslim politics in its national dimensions. And the natural conclusion of this approach is that Muslim politics was stimulated by Islamic sensibility all over India at the same time. I have tried to show that Muslims from Karachi to Calcutta, and from Peshawar to Madras faced similar problems, reacted to them in a similar manner, and were stirred by an awareness of a common destiny. In short, it was a broad national consciousness and was not the product of a particular group. The Aligarh Movement has not been belittled in any way, but it has been put in its proper perspective within the national framework.

The Muslim awakening during this period was symbolized by the MAO College Aligarh, the first Muslim institution for higher English education, and by the Central National Mahomedan Association, the first Muslim political organization. The Muslims began to adjust themselves to English education and political institutions. It was, as a result

of this reorientation of outlook, that a new Muslim leadership was born in Bengal, the North-West Provinces (later known as U. P.), the Punjab, Bombay and Madras. The rapid emergence of Muslim leaders and political associations was a remarkable phenomenon of this period. If Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali shared common ideals it was no mere coincidence; for they were the products of similar socio-political forces impinging upon the Muslim nation all over the Subcontinent. Though they had their personal and political differences, these centred around questions of method rather than aim. Nevertheless all of them were united in the common aim of Muslim uplift and welfare. During this period Muslims began their apprenticeship in political organization and propaganda. In this context, the Mahomedan Literary Society and the Central National Mahomedan Association represent the political microcosm which later grew into the All-India Muslim League. In 1888, attempt was made to organize an All-India Muslim Political Conference which served as the prototype of the All India Muslim League, and not the Mohammadan Educational Conference, as commonly understood. As the Mahomedan Literary Society and the Central National Mahomedan Association were born in Muslim Bengal, it was but natural for the Muslim League to have originated in Dacca.

In the incipient Muslim politics of this period, greater significance lay in the energetic efforts devoted to defining Muslim objectives and, demands in the fields of education, employment and representation. The Muslim struggle to secure their rights in these spheres culminated in their rejection of the Indian National Congress. The demand for separate Muslim representation was older than the Congress, and had arisen neither as a result of the British policy of divide and rule, nor as a reaction to Hindu predominance, but as a positive demand of the Muslim nation. It is evident that this was the seed time of Muslim politics. Even in later years, Muslim politics did not deviate substantially from the fundamental principles laid down by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali.

In highlighting the main themes of Muslim politics, I have been constrained to do no more than just touch upon certain important and extensive issues which could profitably be the subjects of separate research. The growth of Muslim education has not been discussed as such, but has been referred to when it became a political issue between the Muslims and the Government. The language controversy, though of prime importance in the Hindu-Muslim cultural confrontation, has been

analysed in the context of the Muslim share in employment. Similarly, the growth of Hindu revivalism has been excluded as a movement, and alluded to only where relevant to Muslim politics. But the Hindu and Muslim position in employment has been discussed at length as it constituted an economic dimension of Muslim politics. The developments of British policies from Lytton to Lansdowne has not been the main concern except in so far as these affected Muslim politics.

There is no paucity of material on this subject although it is widely dispersed in Pakistan, India and the United Kingdom. The Aligarh Movement is well-documented, but considerable material could still be traced in contemporary newspapers and unpublished original sources. I found the files of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* in the India Office Library very useful for the reconstruction of Sir Syed's politics. Some references of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* were kindly supplied to me by Prof. Shaikh Abdur Rashid. Sir Syed's letter to Carlyle has been preserved in the Carlyle Collection of the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, and is here being brought to light for the first time. Although Sir Syed's cooperation with Surendranath Banerjea in the Civil Service Agitation caused a flutter in official quarters, he maintained this political stance as long as it was compatible with Muslim interests. This little known but significant episode has now been reconstructed, in detail, with the help of the Ripon Collection and the Lyall Collection in the India Office Library.

Nawab Abdul Latif wrote *A Short Account of My Public Life* to win the favour of a special pension from the Government, and as such, he omitted reference to the issues that were likely to be unpalatable to the British administrators. This pamphlet is therefore inadequate. Similarly, *A Short Account of My Humble Efforts to Promote Education, Specially among the Mahomedans* stops short at 1883, and as such is incomplete. *The Quarter Century of Mahomedan Literary Society, 1863 to 1889* makes no mention of the Society's rejection of the Congress. The Mahomedan Literary Society's petition to Parliament on the subject of Muslim representation also did not find any mention in the writings of the founder of the Society. In order to fill these gaps, and to present a critical survey of his politics, I had to resort to contemporary newspapers, Parliamentary Papers, and Lytton, Ripon and Dufferin collections. Syed Ameer Ali, though a historian himself, did not choose to write an account of the Central National Mahomedan Association which he had founded. In his *Memoirs* he has made only cursory references to the achievements of the Association. The *Quinquennial* and *Triennial Reports of the Central*

National Mahomedan Association are valuable sources for the study of the aims and organization of the Association. The reactions of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments to the *Memorial* of the Association are to be discerned in the pages of the *Home* (*Education*) *Proceedings 1885* of the Government of India. The account of Muslim identification with the *Memorial* is partly based upon the above-mentioned *Proceedings*, supplemented by the *Education Commission Reports* for Bengal, the Punjab, the North-West Provinces, Bombay, the C. P. and Madras. The Muslim point of view on this subject has been elicited from contemporary newspapers, while the Hindu opposition to the *Memorial* and the *Resolution of* 1885 is also, based on newspapers. Ameer Ali's efforts to obtain acceptance of the *Memorial* are traced from the Ripon Collection. The Association's efforts to get the *Resolution* properly implemented have been derived from the files of *Rafiq-i-Hind*, which the late Mr. Ibrahim Ali Chishti, the son of veteran Muharram Ali Chishti, kindly placed at my disposal. The Dufferin Collection (microfilm) was also useful. The Muslim dissatisfaction with the implementation of the *Resolution*, though evident in the contemporary press, has been confirmed through authoritative reference in the Cross Collection. A scrutiny of these sources has enabled me to bring into focus the political achievement of the Central National Mahomedan Association and in that entirely new ground has been covered.

A good deal of literature has sprung up about the Muslim rejection of the Congress and Sir Syed's role is duly highlighted. Now, Nawab Abdul Latif's and Syed Ameer Ali's opposition to the Congress has mostly been delineated from unpublished sources. Sir Syed's opposition to the Congress is often traced from his Lucknow speech (December 1887), but a study of *The Pioneer* and *The Statesman and Friend of India* reveals that he had already expressed his misgivings about the Congress in November 1886. Material on Sir Syed's correspondence with Hume has been taken from *The Pioneer* and *The Statesman and Friend of India*, and some of their original letters have been traced from the microfilms of the *Tyabji Papers* in the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Similarly, Badruddin Tyabji's correspondence with Sir Syed has been preserved in the *Tyabji Papers*. The Anglo-Indian press reported and commented on the rejection of the Congress by Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali, and carried the statements issued by them. Tyabji's correspondence with Ameer Ali, regarding the Muslim Political Conference is also reported in the *Tyabji Papers*. Ameer Ali's letters to Sir Syed Ahmad, on the question of establishing a Muslim Political Conference, have been extensively reported in *Rafiq-i-Hind*,

which is our only source of information.

The origin of separate Muslim representation has been traced from the Municipal Records of the Punjab Government, Legislative Proceedings of the Government of India, relevant Parliamentary Papers, and contemporary newspapers. The official standpoint has been reconstructed with the help of private collections of viceroys from Lytton to Lansdowne. *Hansard* and *Lyall Collection* also contain some useful material.

Perhaps comprehensive, but by no means exhaustive, it is earnestly hoped that this study would help in stimulating greater interest in the formative phase of Muslim separatism, and in the re-appraisal of some of the fondly held notions about Muslim politics.

23 December 1979
Quaid-i-Azam University,
Islamabad.

MUHAMMAD YUSUF ABBASI,
Associate Professor.

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I am grateful to Professor Shaikh A. Rashid for his valuable suggestions and for allowing me to make use of his compilation of excerpts of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*. I very much wanted to consult the source material available in India but for some reasons this visit did not come off. However, this deficiency was amply made up during my three visits to the United Kingdom, and I benefitted immensely from the original and unpublished material in the British reference libraries. For their kindness and courtesy, I am vastly indebted to the India Office Reference Library, the British Reference Library, the School of Oriental and African Studies, Senate House Library of London University, Cambridge University Library, and the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. Photocopies of some Muslim petitions to the Parliament were supplied to me by the Librarian of the Library of the House of Commons. I acknowledge this with gratitude. I am deeply obliged for the generous cooperation and help given to me by the Punjab University Library, Punjab Record Office, Punjab Public Library, Lahore, and Bahawalpur Public Library.

At the time of revision, my colleagues, Dr. A. H. Dani, Dr. Waheeduzzaman made useful comments. Dr. Rafique Afzal and Dr. Naeem Qureshi took pains in scrutinizing the footnotes. I am beholden to all of them. Dr. N. A. Baloch, the dynamic and scholarly Director of the Institute of Islamic History, Culture and Civilization took keen interest in the publication of this work. I am grateful to him and to his staff especially Mr. Shafqat Ameen, Mr. Azeem Bhatti, Sayyid Muneer Hussain Shah, and Mr. Khurshid Ahmad who facilitated the printing of the book. I am deeply obliged to Miss Shafi-un-Nissa who undertook the painstaking task of preparing the index.

NOTE

This work is substantially based on my Ph.D. thesis and has been largely revised and modified for the purpose of publication.

South Asia has gained currency recently, it was not exceptional therefore that in historical context the term India or British India should have continued to be used. This study excludes the Indian princely States.

Though an effort has been made to frame the Muslim politics and leadership in all the provinces of British India, the focus largely rests on Muslims of those provinces from which Pakistan was originally culled out in 1947. Since the Muslims of the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) played comparatively a more significant role under Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, their services have been highlighted. But Muslims of Bombay and Madras also stand out prominently in certain fields. Bihar figures alongwith Bengal of which it formed a part.

The word Mohammadan is a semantic atrocity of the colonial era. But the confusion has been worse confounded due to the reckless latitude employed in its spellings or mis-spellings. A bewildering variety of spelling forms appears in official correspondence and newspapers etc. What greater proof there could be of the complete British intellectual domination, that Muslim leaders like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Syed Ameer Ali, Nawab Abdul Latif and others used this obnoxious word without demur. But in fairness, they preferred to style their community as Muslims or Mussalmans. No effort has been made to modify the spelling of Mohammedan wherever it occurs in the quotes or forms an integral part of a name of Muslim body and has been left as such. It would have been a futile effort and misleading too.

Without much regard for phonetics and transliteration in those days most of Muslim proper names were misspelt, perhaps distorted by the English to suit their own taste. Strangely enough even some of the eminent Muslim leaders did not care to apply rules of transliteration to their own names. It would have been inappropriate to correct the spellings of Syed when Syed Ahmad Khan himself signed his name like this.

In case of Urdu or Hindi newspapers, it would seem pedantic to insert the definitive article before their names. Sometimes abbreviations like govt. appear in the excerpts from official correspondence, records or newspapers. I have adhered to the form of abbreviations used in the original sources.

Some theses consulted by me during my stay in the U. K. during 1966-68 were not published then and have been referred to in the text as such. However, I have tried to make amends and included them as published works in the bibliography.

Since their reorganization, the British Museum and the India Office Library have been given new names. It has not been practicable for me at this late stage to have altered the abbreviations of their old names.

Due to an omission, South Asian Subcontinent appears on the page headlines. This sounds rather quaint though not incorrect. Since it was too late to make a change, it is there.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIG	Aligarh Institute Gazette.
BM	British Museum (Now re-designated as British Reference Library).
BNNR	Bengal Native Newspaper Reports.
CNMA	Central National Mahomedan Association.
DC	Dufferin Collection.
IOL	India Office Library (New re-designated as India Office Reference Library).
LAC	Lansdowne Collection.
LTC	Lytton Collection.
LYC	Lyall Collection
MSA	Memoirs of Syed Ameer Ali.
MLS	Mahomedan Literary Society.
NWPNNR	North West Provinces Native Newspaper Reports.
PRO	Punjab Record Office, Lahore.
PUL	Punjab University Library.
QCML	A Quarter Century of Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta—A Resume of the work from 1869-1889.
RC	Ripon Collection.
SAMPL	A Short Account of My Public Life.
SAPEM	A Short Account of My Humble Efforts to Promote Education, Specially among the Mahomedans.
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies.
SUL	Senate House Library, University of London.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

GENESIS OF NEW MUSLIM LEADERSHIP

The year 1857 runs like a stream of blood, across the chronological landscape of the 19th century, dividing the history of Muslim politics in the South Asian Subcontinent into two almost equal segments. The Indian uprising of 1857, in its essence, was the last desperate attempt of the Muslims to redeem their independence from the steady encroachment of the British East India Company; and as such, it was the reassertion of the *de jure* authority against the *de facto* British supremacy in the Indian Subcontinent. By and large, it was a popular movement in which the aristocracy and the *ulema* combined to give the lead to the Muslim masses. Prince and preacher made common cause against the British. Prince Firoz Shah[1] found his counterpart among the *ulema* in Maulvi Ahmad Ullah of Faizabad.[2] Both of them tried to join forces in their attack on Shah Jehan Pur;[3] and this pattern of cooperation was neither localized nor exceptional. All sections of the Muslim community from Bengal to the Punjab were galvanized into activity by the consciousness of a common purpose. It was however, natural that the Muslim leadership in this struggle should spring from the areas where there still was a substantial presence of Muslim nobility and *ulema*. The Punjab had been so denuded of these elements of leadership under Sikh rule that, although Muslims in Lahore, Multan, Jhelum and some other places in the Punjab took up arms against the British, their struggle failed to achieve the intensity and magnitude of the uprisings in Delhi, Lucknow and Bareilly. Not that the Muslims of the Punjab were wanting in religious enthusiasm, they were deficient in adequate leadership. Similar conditions prevailed

1. Kaye and Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. V, London 1888, p. 45.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 379 and Vol. V, p. 292.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 375.

in Bengal, where the process of Muslim deprivation, though slow, had been even more thorough. Thus in 1857, traditional Muslim leadership had been undermined particularly in those areas where they constituted a majority of the population.

Retrospect

During this freedom struggle, the Muslims developed close cooperation with those Hindu elements who had also been quickened into action by their own political goals and religious grievances. The Hindu and Muslim discontent was a parallel process, since it had sprung up as a reaction against the transgressions of the same political authority. The Hindu-Muslim alliance was more in the nature of a common front against a common enemy, rather than a national struggle inspired by any positive ideology of Indian nationalism. Some blunders of British policy had brought the historic Maratha rebel on to the side of the decrepit Mughal Emperor. The inherent contradiction between the Mughal and Maratha position was only shelved, not resolved. The temporary Hindu-Muslim unity was more in the nature of an alliance of expediency than of common ideals. Bahadur Shah's brave proclamation, despite its emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity, remained an isolated pronouncement in the main current of Hindu-Muslim political relations. Although Hindu and Muslim soldiers "fought for their religion, destroyed the tyrants and enemies of their faith",[1] yet they stood separate as social groups. However, a semblance of national cohesion was achieved in 1857. Could that semblance be turned into a substance of lasting national unity? The first 'No' to this question came in the defeat of the freedom fighters, the second 'No' was pronounced by the victorious British.

Although Muslims were as much responsible for the uprising of 1857 as their Hindu compatriots, the official opinion in the highest circles of Government was inclined to consider the Muslims as the sole motivating force behind the uprising. As early as January 1858, Sir James Outram wrote:

> The rebellion was set on foot by Muhammadans, and that long before we rescued Oudh from the oppressors. It has been ascertained that prior to that Musalman fanatics traversed the land,. . . and induced the Hindu Sipahis to raise the green standard and forswear their allegiance on the ground that we had determined to make the whole of India involuntary converts to Christianity.[2]

1. 'The Proclamation, 1857 War of Independence', *Pakistan Times*, 10 May 1957 p. v. Supplement.

2. Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, London 1888, p. 27.

Later, the Court Martial gave expression to similar sentiments in its verdict, which was not only an indictment of Bahadur Shah, but also a judgement on "the deep-planned and well-concerted conspiracy"[1] of the Muslims.

> "The known restlessness of the Mohammadan fanaticism has been the first aggressor, the vindictive intolerance of that peculiar religion has been struggling for mastery, seditious conspiracy has been its means."[2]

Sir John Lawrence, Commissioner of the Punjab, somewhat toned down these one-sided opinions, but the charge of Muslim conspiracy still figured prominently in his address to the Court Martial. He considered the uprising primarily as a military mutiny and observed that after the fall of Delhi:

> "The Muhammadan soldiers and population became more actively hostile than the Hindus. This, indeed, is easy to understand, fanaticism and ferocity being specially inculcated by the tenets of their religion".[3]

For political reasons, the Court Martial was determined to mitigate the Hindu involvement, "yet not one paper has been found to show that the Hindus, as a body, had been conspiring against us or that their Brahmans and priests had been preaching a crusade against Christians".[4] The partiality towards Hindus and the prejudice against Muslims was epitomized in the closing lines of the verdict of the Court Martial:

> "If we now take a retrospective view of the various circumstances which we have been able to elicit during our extended inquiries, we shall perceive how exclusively Muhammadan are all the prominent points that attach to it. A Muhammadan priest, with pretended visions and assumed miraculous powers—a Muhammadan king, his dupe and his accomplice—a Muhammadan clandestine embassy to the Muhammadan powers of Persia and Turkey resulting—Muhammadan prophesies as to the downfall of our own—the most cold-blooded murders by Muhammadan assassins—a religious war for Muhammadan ascendency—a Muhammadan press unscrupulously abetting—and Muhammadan Sipahis initiating the mutiny. Hinduism, I may say, is no where either reflected or represented, if it be brought forward at all, it is only in subservience to its ever-aggressive neighbour".[5]

1. Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, Appendix 'C', p. 345.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 355.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 340.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 349.

The Hindus were regarded as less dangerous, "as in their case there has been no king to set up, no religion to be propagated by the sword".[1]

However, Canning did not take up such opinions, coming as they did from the highest officers of the realm, as the basis of his policy, which he outlined in the Resolution of 31 July 1857, stating that: Justice and not vengeance was the policy of the British Government. The Queen's Proclamation was designed to "breathe feelings of generosity and benevolence",[2] and it gave expression to high principles of justice, toleration and material prosperity as the goals of British policy in India. The Queen's Proclamation and the Resolution of the Government of India, however noble in intent and expression, were rendered ineffective by the mental reservations and undisguised vendetta of the British administrators. Those officers who were required to implement the policy of justice and benevolence let loose a reign of terror, and the restoration of peace soon degenerated into a large scale genocide of the Muslims. The British vengeance was so savagely fierce that "the historian cannot dwell without blushing".[3] The Muslims were singled out as the main targets of retribution. After the collapse of Indian resistance, "the English turned fiercely on the Muhammadans as upon their real enemies".[4]

The transient comradeship in arms between Hindus and Muslims began to fade from political memory, and the two peoples began to drift apart from each other on to their separate socio-political paths. The Hindus who had already made considerable headway in English education, under the inspiration of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, found little difficulty in readjusting to the goals of economic and educational activity. But Muslims who had already rejected English education and had little aptitude for business were left without any political and social goals to stabilize their broken society. The staggering defeat in struggle for power and tragic loss of leadership left the Muslims so stunned and bewildered that for a time, they seemed to have lost all sense of direction.

Exit of the Ulema

For the last century and a half, the ulema had dominated the political scene. The mantle of leadership had fallen on their shoulders after

1. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

2. Queen Victoria to Derby, 15 August 1858, C. H. Philips, *Evolution of India and Pakistan*, London 1964 p. 10,

3. L. J. Trotter, *History of the British Empire in India*, Vol. II, London 1866, p. 325.

4. A. C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, Vol. I, London 1899 p. 239.

the authority had slipped out from the hands of the later Mughal rulers.[1] It was a strange contrast that, in an atmosphere of dismal political decay and moral incertitude Shah Wali Ullah (1703-1762) should have formulated the thesis of a religio-political revival tantamount to the original ideal of a religious community or (*millat*),[2] and began its propagation through a school which he helped to set up in Delhi. The stream of religio-political consciousness initiated by him, gained force under his sons and disciples, who worked as a team. Leadership developed into a self-renewing process in which one leader followed the others through the years.[3] Since leadership did not imply lineal succession, but an energetic continuation of traditions of scholarship and service, the revivalist movement of Shah Wali Ullah achieved a dynamism and popular support that has seldom been equalled by any other Muslim religious movement in the Subcontinent. The religious influence of Shah Abdul Aziz transcended the geographical limits of the South Asian Subcontinent, and spread to Kabul and Bukhara[4] in the North and to Istanbul and Hijaz in the West. Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed organized a *jihad* to transform the ideal of an Islamic State into a political reality. Though his immediate objective was to destroy the Sikh tyranny in the Punjab, his "ultimate aim was a *jihad* against the British, who had spread a net of deceit and doubt in order to liquidate the Divine Religion".[5] His defeat at Balakot did not put an end to his mission, as it was kept alive by the Mujahids of the North-West.

However, the Jihad Movement suffered a temporary set-back when the followers of Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed took conflicting stands on the question of his mysterious disappearance at Balakot.[6] Maulana Muhammad Ishaq, leader of the Delhi School, insisted on conformity with the Hanafi *fiqh*, and warned against the injection of extremist Wahhabi ideas in the movement of Shah Wali Ullah. He further sought to establish contact with the Sultan of Turkey in order to widen the scope of the Muslim struggle for freedom.[7] He set up a committee under the

1. Khalid bin Sayeed, *Pakistan : The Formative Phase*, Karachi 1960, p. 12.

2. A modern writer has evaluated the leadership of Shah Wali Ullah thus: "He laid the foundations of a religio-political philosophy which is still alive in Pakistan; in fact, he is to Pakistan what Martin Luther is to Germany". Hafeez. Malik, *Moslem Nationalism in India and Pakistan*, Washington 1963, p. 139.

3. Obaid Ullah Sindhi, *Shah Wali Ullah Aur un ki Siyasi Tehrik*, Lahore 1945, pp. 63-64.

4. Abul Kalam Azad, *Tazkira*, Lahore 1919, p. 224.

5. Ghulam Rasul Mehr, *Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed*, Lahore 1952, p. 255.

6. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, Karachi 1974, pp. 215-17.

7. Sindhi, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-24. See also Qureshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-18.

chairmanship of Maulana Mamluk Ali, which decided to forsake impotent armed struggle in favour of Islamic education.[1] In view of changed political circumstances, it was felt that the time had come to bring about a readjustment of political goals and methods. So they sought to train an elite that would keep alive the spirit of Islam and love of freedom among the Muslim community. These aims it was thought, could be achieved by establishing a dynamic system of religious education and immunizing the Muslim mind against the taint of Western culture. They shifted the centre of their activities from Delhi to Mecca. This change of scene also marked a change of approach. In fact, Mamluk Ali was responsible for "putting the collective movement of Imam Wali Ullah on the new path".[2]

The leadership of the *ulema* remained almost unaffected during the uprising of 1857. Although most of them believed the struggle against the English to be a *jihad* and participated in it with a burning zeal, yet a few held aloof, not for reasons of loyalty to the British, but for their scruples about *bellum justum*.[3] Maulvi Inayat Ali preached *jihad* to some of the Indian troops. Maulana Fazal-i-Haq Khairabadi was one of the *ulema* who drafted the *fatwa* declaring the struggle of 1857 to be a *jihad.* Military leaders like Bakht Khan considered it imperative to give a religious and legal basis to the struggle against the British. Consequently, a meeting of the prominent *ulema* was convened in Delhi, and they issued a *fatwa* calling upon every Muslim to stand up in arms against the British.[4] Henceforth, religious, political and military leadership was centred in Delhi, which assumed its old symbolic character in the Muslim national sentiment. The cry of *jihad* rang out all over the Subcontinent, and the Muslim people from Delhi to Madras were stirred to action by the lofty sentiment of this call. Not surprising therefore to find the green robed *Mujahids* of Bareilly rushing at the English guns and bayonets with cries of "*Din, din* [*sic*] *Bismillah*"[5] or to witness them fighting to the last on the ramparts of Delhi.[6] The *ulema* were no idle scholars excelling in

1. Sindhi, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-24.

2. Hafeez Malik, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

3. Sindhi, *op. cit.*, p. 126. Some of the followers of Maulana Mohammad Ishaq took up a neutral attitude; see *ibid.*, p. 136. See also Mehr, *Sarguzasht-i-Mujahideen*, p. 291.

4. Qureshi, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

5. L. J. Trotter, *op. cit.*, p. 335. In fact the word *Deen* meaning faith is implied here. *Bismillah* the opening verse of the Holy Quran means "In the name of Allah". This slogan called the freedom fighters to arms "in the name of Allah and for the sake of Faith".

6. Qureshi, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

the art of religious disputation but men cast in a heroic mould, who set a shining example in courage as well as learning. The saga of valour and matryrdom, of exile and imprisonment, of trials and tribulation, inscribed in the blood and suffering of *ulema* like Ahmad Ullah, Imdad Ullah, Abdul Jalil, Liaqat Ali, Kafi, Pir Ali, Ghulam Hussain and others,[1] during the eventful year of the uprising and after, shall ever remain a source of inspiration for freedom fighters. However, the heroic resistance of the *ulema* ended in a defeat which shattered their political leadership. Shah Abdul Aziz's followers were dispersed and the precincts of his school converted into private Hindu property.[2] Yet some followers of Shah Abdul Aziz showed remarkable resilience and fortitude in that dark hour, and kept up their struggle in a different form. If armed strength had proved inadequate, all the more reason that Islamic education and training should be organized to revitalize disheartened Muslims and show them a new way for survival.[3] In 1866, Deoband replaced Delhi in matters of religious leadership. The establishment of the Deoband School epitomized a new trend in Muslim education and politics. However, by this time, the *ulema* were fast fading from the political scene, and their eclipse, though primarily due to British policies, was hastened by acute sectarian controversies between the extremist Wahhabis and the orthodox Hanafis.[4]

Although several years had elapsed since the uprising of 1857, the Government had not been able to overcome its traumatic fear of a renewed Muslim struggle and it continued to look upon Muslims as potential enemies of the Empire. The power of the *ulema* had been crushed in British India, but their influence could not be completely eliminated from the North-West Frontier where the embers of *jihad* were kept alive by the warlike Pathan tribes. Since Dalhousie, the Government of India had been keeping a vigilant eye on the developing contact between the *ulema* of Patna and the *ghazis* of Sittana.[5] In 1852, the Wahhabi unrest in the tribal areas turned out to be insignificant but was taken to be symptomatic of the general Muslim opposition.[6] After 1857, the focus of Muslim

1. For details see Qureshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-213. See also Saiyid Muhammad Mian, *Ulema-i-Haq Aur un ke Mujahidana Karnamey*, Delhi 1946, Vol. I.

2. Manazir Ahsan Gilani, *Tazkira-i-Hazrat Shah Wali Ullah*, Karachi 1952, pp. 310-12.

3. Hafeez Malik, *op. cit.*, p. 192. See also Mian, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 53-54.

4. Qureshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-24.

5. Minute by Lord Dalhousie, dated 26 August 1852, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1872, Vol. 44, BM.

6. "But the numbers of these Wahabees (Sc) are known to be small, and there is no reasons to suppose that there is any more movement or intrigue at present going on than must at all times be expected among the Mussulmans of India", Extract from Minute by the Governor General of India, Lord Dalhousie, concurred in by the Members of the Board, dated 7 September 1852, *Parliamentary Papers*, BM.

resistance naturally, shifted from enslaved Delhi and Lucknow to independent Swat, and soon the Jihad Movement took root in the North-West Frontier. However, by now the Government was better informed about the designs of the *Mujahids* and their contacts with secret centres in Bihar and Bengal. It was reported:

> Ever since 1852, strange isolated circumstances have at recurring intervals, come within the cognizance of the Government, all pointing to show that supplies of men and money were being systematically forwarded by conspirators within our empire to the asylum of traitors on the Mahaban.[1]

The *Mujahids* displayed exceptional ability in organizing the nucleus of an armed movement, and "their new stronghold at Mulka....soon became the most important colony of the sect and a very dangerous neighbour of our frontier tribes".[2] The Government was alarmed and redoubled its efforts to stamp out the influence of the *Mujahids* within British India. Taylor, the Commissioner of Patna, perhaps overemphasized the Wahhabi danger in saying,

> That in the event of any more serious crisis, and any eminent success being obtained against us, these Wahabees could be ready to merge their own differences with other *Mussulmans* and join in a crusade against the English.[3]

The *Mujahids* posed a far greater challenge to the British than a mere tribal confederacy, and the Government was naturally perturbed at the prospect of a common front in which all the Muslims might coalesce, irrespective of their sectarian differences.

The Government felt that any commotion in the Wahhabi settlements would not only render the frontier unsafe, but might expose the British Empire to danger in a region sensitive to Russian influence. Consequently, "a protracted and costly campaign"[4] had to be undertaken in order to liquidate the centres of *Mujahid* resistance and to isolate the North-West Frontier Region from the rest of Muslim India. The Government struck hard against the *Mujahids*, broke up their centres, and tried their leaders for treason. The so-called Wahhabi trials from 1864 to 1870, *inter alia*,

1. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XL, 1864, pp. 126 and 134. It may be noted that the *Mujahids* were dubbed as Wahhabis by the Government and the press, as such the word Wahhabi was invested with uncomplimentary overtones which are so often reflected in contemporary political reference. Later on the term 'Wahhabi' became synonymous with rebel or 'revolutionary', depending on the viewpoint of the person reacting to it.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

3. G. W. Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, London 1904, Vol. III, p. 401.

4. *Calcutta Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

revealed that the Wahhabi uprising in the North-West frontier was symptomatic of deep-seated Muslim grievances and was a protest against their suppression, which had continued without diminution or amelioration for the last so many decades. Though the Wahhabis bore the brunt of oppression, other groups went through their own share of suffering. So great was the Government's suspicion of the Wahhabis that some officials saw signs of a Wahhabi upheaval under the outward calm of British rule".

> "The atmosphere may be calm on the surface under British rule, but beneath a thin crust the volcanic fires of fanaticism and bigotry still smoulder".[1]

Knighton, in a letter to Lord Cranbrook, described the Muslims as "the most dangerous class of Indian citizens".[2]

Some Hindus also advised the Government to exercise vigilance concerning the activities of the Wahhabis and Faraizis:

> "Such sects as the Ferazis and the Wahhabies, even if impotent for a great movement....are dangerous as the ever-ready nucleus, round which may gather all the discontents and hates and ambitions".[3]

They warned the Government that, despite the theological differences which divided the main body of Muslims from the Wahhabis, they shared a common religion and a common political aim of re-establishing Muslim dominion in India:

> Some of their peculiar tenets may be repugnant to the orthodox Musalmans, but there must be still the bond of a common religion uniting both, and above all political objects of the two sects must be dear to all Muhammadans, who as men, naturally, sigh for their last dominion, and, as acceptors of an aggressive creed, believe in the duty of war against the infidel, Christian or Hindu, Jew or Buddhist.[4]

The Hindus endorsed the anti-Wahhabi policies of the Government, and as a result,

> The cry of no Wahabism rang from one end of Northern and Eastern Hindustan from Chittagong to Peshawar. The persecution can be imagined. During the height of Wahabophobia, life became insupportable to many Mussulmans....[5]

1. Forrest, *op. cit.*, p. 403.
2. *The Policy of the Future of India*, 1867. Tract 504, IOL.
3. *Hindoo Patriot*, 2 August 1870, cited in *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 50, 1870, p. 73, IOL.
4. *Calcutta Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
5. *Reis and Rayyat*, Calcutta, 9 May 1882, BM.

By 1876, the 'Wahabophobia' had died down, but the Wahhabis continued to suffer from restrictions which were tantamount to a denial of religious freedom and civic rights that were enjoyed by non-Muslims without question. The Wahhabis from Bengal to Punjab were subjected to discrimination in many subtle ways. Maulvi Muhammad Husain and Maulvi Rahim Ullah and 300 petitioners gave expression to the feelings of thousands of Wahhabis of the Punjab in their petition to the Lt.-Governor of the Punjab. They complained of restrictions imposed upon them despite their loyalty. They failed to get justice from the courts, were excluded from Government appointments, and were also prevented from performing their religious duties. Though the Government of the Punjab assured them of their legitimate rights, it also insisted that they stayed away from mosques belonging to other-sects.[1] Indeed, it was a paradoxical situation that even though the Muslims had rendered submission to British authority, the Government was still unwilling to repose its confidence in them. Since mutual understanding remained largely absent, the crisis of confidence was prolonged into a state of chronic mistrust and misapprehension.

Though the Government was aware of the political consequences of what is often referred to as Wahhabi activism, it was not till the Wahhabi trials and the publication of Hunter's book, that it began to be appreciated that a religious consensus among the Wahhabis and the most numerous Hanafis, had subsisted unbroken despite protracted struggles against the British. Hunter and O'Kinealy thought that the challenge to British authority did not arise from Muslim arms but from the attitude of a religious rejection of British rule. Ever since Shah Abdul Aziz, the *ulema* had held India to be a *Dar-ul-Harb*.[2] The Hanafi *ulema* held that there were three conditions under which a *Dar-ul-Islam* could be transformed into a *Dar-ul-Harb:*

1st—the public exercise of infidel authority and the non-exercise of Muslim authority within it.

2nd—Annexation to Dar-ul-Harb without interposition of any Moslem city or community.

3rd—the non-existence in it of a true believer.[3]

In the subcontinent, the domination of the infidels and non-existence of Muslim authority were reasons enough, according to Shah Muhammad Ismail, to reduce India to a *Dar-ul-Harb*—and to justify the waging of a *jihad* against the British. He compared the Muslim position in British

1. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 29 December 1876, (Henceforth AIG), IOL.
2. *A History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, Vol. I, p. 540.
3. *Calcutta Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

India to that of the Jews under the Pharaohs of Egypt.[1] He emphasized the need for a continued struggle against the infidel power until the rule of Islam had been restored.

> "When non-Muslims dominate over the lands of Islam, then it becomes incumbent upon the people in general and upon the big rulers in particular to continue their struggle against the infidels until such time that the lands of Islam are redeemed from their control, otherwise the Muslims would be guilty of sin..."[2]

Maulvi Karamat Ali, a Hanafi comrade of Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed, in his book, *Kat'u-al-Imam* (1838), preferred *hijrat* to Mecca or Medina for spiritual reasons.

> "There is a difference between you and me as regards residence in this country. I am here, but my heart is there; and I desire that—God will convey me to the *Dar-ul-Islam* or—render it such..."[3]

Maulvi Muhammad Ishaq preferred to migrate to Hijaz rather than stay in India,[4] and from his headquarters in Mecca, organized a movement for the emancipation of Indian Muslims from both political domination and cultural subordination.[5] In 1867, Maulvi Qutb-ud-Din published his work *A'ima Tafaser*, in which three alternatives were held out to Muslims living in a *Dar-ul-Harb:* martyrdom, *hijrat* or everlasting punishment in the next world.[6] Commenting on the *fatwa* of Maulvi Qutb-ud-Din, O'Kinealy wrote:

> When such language is used by the chief of Hanfis in India, we may fairly doubt whether, so far as the British Government is concerned, there is such difference of opinion between the Hanfis and Wahabees as we are often assured exists.[7]

The publication of literature which put a premium on defiance of British rule, and the existence of a religious opinion amongst largest section of

1. *Ibid.*, p. 386.
2. Shah Muhammad Ismail's letter, cited by Mehr in *Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed*, p. 250.
3. *Calcutta Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 390.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 391.
5. Sindhi, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-6.
6. *Calcutta Review*, *op. cit.*, pp. 390-2.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 386. Although the Hanafi *ulema* fully endorsed *jihad* and *hijrat* in the religio-political circumstances of British India, it is rather surprising that the historical spotlight has all along rested on the Wahhabi *ulema* as the real freedom fighters. The Hanafi *ulema* have been either omitted or denigrated. Recently, Dr. I. H. Qureshi has sought to define the role of the *ulema* in its proper perspective. It would be more realistic if the *jihad* movement is not interpreted as a Wahhabi enterprise only, but is portrayed as a national struggle.

Muslims, holding that British authority was repugnant to Islam was sufficient to mobolise Government machinery to counteract all positive response to such subversive literature.

By 1871, the question of Muslim loyalty had become a prevalent subject of discussion in the political forums of India:

> "The attention of the public has been lately turned to the state of Mahomedan feeling in India, owing to three causes, viz. the Wahhabi trials, Dr. Hunter's book on the 'Indian Mussalmans', and the murder of the late lamented Chief Justice Norman. Dr. Hunter's work has made a great sensation in India and has been read with acidity by all classes of the community."[1]

Controversy about Muslim loyalty raged in the newspapers in which Englishmen also participated.[2] Some Muslim officials also joined in the issue, and attempted to disprove Hunter's thesis of Muslim disloyalty as a religious obligation.[3] Under the circumstances, the Government of India thought it expedient to revise its policy towards the Muslims.[4] An equally significant step was taken to enlist the cooperation of those *ulema* who could formulate a legal basis of British rule, in accordance with *fiqh*, and commend it to the Muslim masses. It was not unnatural that the Government did not like to convey an impression of either its anxiety or involvement in such an enterprise, since in order to be successful such a move would have to appear to be a spontaneous verdict of the *ulema* in favour of the British Government. Evidently for this purpose, the British could not put forward the *ulema* whom they had branded as conspirators in state trials. The exit of religious leaders like Maulvi Yahya Ali, "the mainspring of the great treason",[5] from the political scene marked the end of an era in the history of Muslim leadership. All the *ulema* were not suspect in the eyes of the Government. Some of them had even formulated a causistry which equated the British Raj with the *Dar-ul-Islam*. However, the Government gave only limited recognition to such *ulema* and strictly refrained from fostering elements of

1. Khan Bahadur Syed Ahmad Khan, *Review of Dr. Hunter's Indian Mussalmans*, Benares 1872, p. 5.

2. It is presumed that Muir wrote in *The Pioneer* of 23 November, 1871, in contradiction of Hunter. Altaf Husain Hali, *Hayat-i-Javid*, Lahore 1957, p. 233.

3. A Muslim official of Bhagalpur wrote a letter in a newspaper on this subject. See preface to the *Abstract of Proceedings of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta*, 1871, Tract No. 549, IOL.

4. See "Resolution of the Government of India on Muslim Education," 13 June 1873. Extracts in Philips, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-3.

5. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XL, 1864, pp. 131-32.

new political leadership from those *ulema* who did not fit in with British political ideas and institutions.

The Emergence of New Leadership

The growth of Muslim and Hindu leaderships in the South Asian Subcontinent did not run along parallel lines. It was a political necessity of *Pax Brittanica* to foster elements of leadership among the Indian peoples. The Hindus showed little reluctance in readjusting their educational outlook with the change in their political affiliations:

> "Hindus who, since a long time, had been accustomed to adopt the language, manners and customs of their conquerors, regarded these institutions as a great boon; while the Muhammadans, to preserve their religion and religious views, naturally stood aloof from them..."[1]

The Hindus looked upon British rule as a deliverance from the Muslim yoke, and considered English education as a blessing:

> "Under the oppressive rule of the Muhammadans we lost all our ancient wealth, glory, learning..."[2]

In contrast, the Muslims had resisted British imperialist expansion from Plassey to Sittana. The Muslims, in their eagerness "to preserve their religion and religious views"[3] rejected English education. Muslim reaction to British domination was conditioned by religion, while the Hindu response was largely motivated by secular considerations. In their interest, the British, promoted Hindu revivalism, and sought to depress[4] the Muslims in the process of development, in order to keep them in a state of subservience. The British policy was 'pro-Hindu' and generally 'anti-Muslim'.[5] This would explain the time-lag in the emergence of Raja Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833) and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98) as leaders of their respective communities. Muslims followed a different course of development.

The enlightened self-interest of the Government and the Muslim urge to progress interacted to shape the emerging Muslim leadership. The Government chose to utilize the services of Muslim employees of proven

1. The Secretary *Anjuman-i-Islamya*, Lahore to the Under Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, 1 August 1882, *India Home* (*Education*) *Proceedings 1885*, Vol. 2506, p. 487, IOL.

2. *Surhid*, 21 March 1876, *BNNR*.

3. *India Home* (*Education*) *Proceedings*, *1885*, Vol. 2506, *op. cit.*, p. 487, IOL.

4. Syed Mahmud, *History of English Education in India* (*1781-1893*), Aligarh, 1895, p. 155.

5. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Calcutta, 1946, p. 407.

loyalty to create a favourable political climate; for there was no dearth of loyal elements among the Muslim. An increasing number of influential Muslim officials had begun to favour an adjustment with the British on terms of mutual confidence and cooperation for the sake of Muslim progress. Nawab Abdul Latif and Sir Syed Ahmad were eminent exponents of this policy of loyalism. They had earned sufficient recognition for their loyal services to take upon themselves the task of establishing a rapport between the Government and the Muslims. An understanding with the British was not only a prerequisite for personal advancement, but also for the progress of the Muslim community. This was not a policy of mere opportunism, but the dictate of political realism.[1]

In Bengal, Nawab Abdul Latif, emerging as a pro-British leader, had already earned recognition for having fostered understanding between the Government and the Muslims.[2] He took the initiative in neutralising the Wahhabi influence in the Muslim majority areas of East Bengal.[3] He invited Maulvi Karamat Ali Jaunpuri, who commanded respect among the Sunni Muslims,[4] to address a meeting of the Mahomedan Literary Society and dispel the belief that *jihad* was incumbent against the British. He maintained that:

> "British India, which is at present under Christian Government, is *Dar-ul-Islam*, (Country of Islam or Safety), according to the dogmas of the Hanafee Sect."[5]

The three conditions which were said to transform a country into a *Dar-ul-Harb* (land of war) did not exist in case of the British dominion in India. The Muslims enjoyed freedom in matters of worship.[6] They were forbidden, in law, to resort to *jihad* in a *Dar-ul-Islam*, and any such attempt "would be rightly pronounced rebellion".[7] Maulvi Fazli Ali confirmed these opinions, and argued that if the Sultan of Turkey, the Custodian of

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, London, 1945, p. 462.

2. "In this way, you have materially promoted a good understanding between this class of the community and their rulers and fellow-subjects; and so far as the present altered state of feeling is owing to your active and liberal exertions..." Bayley, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to Moulvie Abdul Lateef Khan Bahadoor, dated 23 April 1867, cited by Nawab Abdool Luteef Khan Bahadoor, *A Short Account of My Public Life*, Calcutta 1885, pp. 20-1, IOL. (Henceforth referred to as *SAMPL*).

3. *Abstract of Proceedings of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta*, 1871, p. 1.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Holy Places maintained relations of "friendship and cordiality" with the British, it would be unjustified for the Indian Muslims to mount a *jihad* against the "Ally of the Sultan".[1] Maulvi Abdul Hakeem asserted that "thousands of learned men"[2] have considered the British rule right from its beginning as a *Dar-ul-Islam*. He also cited a *fatwa* (clerical verdict) of Maulvi Qutb-ud-Din of Delhi, that the joint Hindu-Muslim struggle against the British in 1857 was not a *jihad* but a rebellion.[3] He also referred to a *fatwa* of Shah Abdul Aziz which he had seen in some manuscript, that India was a *Dar-ul-Islam*.[4] Nawab Abdul Latif explained the political aspects of the question, and emphasized that it would be both injudicious and ungrateful of Muslim to fight against the British who had defended the Sultan during the Crimean War.[5] The Khedive of Egypt maintained friendly relations with the British. The Amir of Afghanistan relied on a British subsidy for his existence. It was, therefore, proper that the Indian Muslims should not wage war against "a Nation ever ready to help the Mahomedan, whenever and wherever there should be occasion for it".[6] The Society also propagated a *fatwa* which had been obtained from the Mufti of Mecca, asserting that India was a *Dar-ul-Islam*.[7] This *fatwa* was reinforced by a similar *fatwa* by Maulvi Muhammad Fazl-i-Haq Khairabadi,[8] who had been one of the authors of a *fatwa* of *jihad*[9] in 1857. This altered juristic attitude was symptomatic of a change of outlook among a section of *ulema*.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

3. It is significant that the pro-Government *ulema* began to distort the *fatwas* of some *ulema* like Maulvi Qutb-ud-Din, who were well-known for their opposition to British rule. The evidence of the *Calcutta Review* is unambiguous about the *fatwa* of Maulvi Qutb-ud-Din, who had declared India to be a *Dar-ul-Harb*. See *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 51, pp. 390-2.

4. It appears that the speaker intended to employ the authority of Shah Abdul Aziz in order to strengthen his argument, which itself was manifestly untenable. The contemporary authorities and modern writers are in agreement that Shah Abdul Aziz considered British India to be a *Dar-ul-Harb*. For the contents of his *fatwa*, see W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalmans*, Lahore 1964, pp. 104-05. See also *A History of the Freedom Movement*, Vol. 1, p. 540.

5. *Abstract of Proceedings of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta*, pp. 14-15.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, p. 22-23.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 22, footnote.

9. Ghulam Rasul Mehr, *1857 Kay Mujahid*, Lahore nd; p. 133.

Nawab Abdul Latif published 5,000 copies of the above proceedings and distributed these among the Muslims of India.[1] The Mahomedan Literary Society thus functioned as an instrument designed to foster loyalty and cooperation with the Government. However, Hunter was sceptical about the influence of Nawab Abdul Latif and his Society. Hunter's criticism of such *Sunni fatwas* as a "triumph of legal subtlety",[2] though not incorrect, was both inopportune and unfortunate as it tended to undermine the quantum of confidence that the Mahomedan Literary Society was labouring to build up in the British Government. Hunter's appreciation of the question of *Dar-ul-Harb* was more in conformity with the views of Shah Abdul Aziz, as he reduced the *fatwas* propagated by the Society to the level of theological expedients, which furnished the wealthy classes "a pretext to wash their hands of the business".[3] But the *Sunni fatwas* were more than a riposte; and, in fact, represented an effort at juristic compromise, which was symbolized by a transformation in the ideas of a section of the *Sunni ulema*. It is, therefore, difficult to subscribe to Hunter's view that the *fatwa* had a limited influence on the rich, and that their impression on "the more numerous and dangereous class will be simply nill".[4] This view was more pessimistic than realistic. On his part, Nawab Abdul Latif maintained that the steps by the Society taken to counteract the Wahhabi unrest "did contribute not a little to allay agitation amongst the most ignorant and misinformed of my co-religionists".[5] Ashley Eden, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, appreciated that Nawab Abdul Latif had to face "great opposition" in his "constant endeavours to promote the cause of Mahomedan Improvement".[6] It is significant that Ashley Eden commended his efforts a few months after the memorable meeting of the Mahomedan Literary Society. Bayley was more explicit in acknowledging Nawab Abdul Latif's services in combating the Wahhabi influence, and conveyed to him Mayo's appreciation of his efforts. "Lord Mayo expressed himself pleased with your efforts to calm the excited feelings among the Mahomedans of Lower India, or at least certain of them, about the end of 1870, and thought those efforts were likely to prove useful."[7] This official approbation was borne out

1. *SAMPL*, p. 29.
2. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
5. *SAMPL*, p. 29.
6. A. Eden to Moulvie Abdool Luteef Khan Khan Bahadoor, 11 April 1871, *ibid.*, p. 22.
7. Bayley to Abdool Lateef, 4 April 1878, *ibid.*, p. 29.

by a Hindu editor, who testified that Nawab Abdul Latif came "as usual to the fore" in impressing the need for loyalty upon the Muslims at a time when the Government was "under such a fright" that it was procuring certificates from Muslim doctors of law in its favour.[1] It is evident that he did guide Muslim opinion into the orbit of loyalty. He was the first advocate of loyalism among Bengali Muslims as Raja Ram Mohun Roy had been among Bengali Hindus. By 1870, he had gained the acceptance of the *Sunnis* through his Oriental manners,[2] personal accomplishments and moderate views both in religion and politics. He was well-known as a *Sunni* leader to Sayyid Jamal-ud-Din Afghani, who recommended him to Blunt.[3] Despite his identification with the British, his eminence as a Muslim leader was recognised by no less a revolutionary than Sayyid Jamal-ud-Din Afghani,[4] and earned the admiration of a liberal like Blunt.[5]

The Government continued to raise him in public esteem by giving recognition to his loyal services. In 1862, he was nominated to the Bengal Legislative Council, becoming the first Muslim to be appointed to the Council, and "at that time, the only one in any of the Legislatures, Local or Imperial".[6] He was nominated thrice to the Bengal Council, and took "keen interest in the general legislation of the country".[7] He distinguished himself as a representative of the Muslims; and, while offering him his third term in the Council, Campbell wrote:

> "I don't think the Mahomedan Community could be better represented in the Legislative Council than by yourself..."[8]

His scholarship and zeal for education had already been accorded recognition by Elgin, who appointed him to the fellowship of the University of Calcutta in 1863.

> "...your nomination to this body would be attended with benefit to the University, and would be regarded as a public acknowledgment of the services which it has already been in your power to render to the encouragement of letters, and to the promotion of the interests of general education..."[9]

1. *Reis and Rayyat*, 9 May 1885.
2. *The Statesman*, 11 July 1893, IOL.
3. W. S. Blunt, *India under Ripon*, London 1909, pp. 14 and 97.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
6. *SAMPL*, p. 4.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
8. Campbell to Moulvie Abdool Luteef, 30 December 1872, *Ibid.*, p. 5.
9. Hovell-Thurlow, Private Secretary to the Governor General to Abdool Lateef, 29 January 1863, *Ibid.*, p. 16.

His work for the establishment and promotion of the Mahomedan Literary Society was commended by John Lawrence, who assured him of his "hearty good wishes for the extension and success" of the Society.[1] In 1877, he was awarded the title of 'Khan Bahadur' and the citation of the title was an acknowledgment of his efforts for the promotion of English education among Muslims.[2]

The socio-political processes that had brought Nawab Abdul Latif to the forefront in Bengal found a parallel in the rise of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to Muslim leadership in Northern India. Though still a petty official in 1847, his book, *Asar-us-Sanadeed*, won him recognition from British Orientalists.[3] The Government appreciatively acknowledged his "conspicuous loyalty",[4] for having saved the lives of a body of Englishmen in the Bijnore uprising of 1858. The Muslim debacle in the Revolt of 1857 was more than a personal tragedy,[5] for him it was a national disaster.[6] His house was looted, his maternal uncle and a cousin were killed by the unruly soldiery, and his mother died of shock and sickness a few months later. He was so deeply moved by the sufferings of his co-religionists that it turned his hair grey, and he resolved to revitalize the downtrodden Muslims of India. At that time of crisis, he took upon himself the task of explaining in "true and manly words"[7] that the Muslims were not the sole architects of the Rebellion of 1857. He argued that though both Hindu and Muslim elements were involved, the upheaval of 1857 was, in no small measure, a product of the Government policy of not associating any Indian in the administration of the country.[8] The *Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind* was not merely an apologia for Muslims but also a defence of the Indian people as a whole. The *Asbab* did exercise an influence on British public opinion, which "began to think in the same strain as Sir Syed".[9] But as an apologia of Muslims the *Asbab* had little influence on Government policy, despite the favourable opinions expressed on it in the India Office.[10] However,

1. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
3. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-17.
4. Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 108-11.
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-35.
6. Siraj-ud-Din Ahmad, *Lekcharon ka Majmua*, Lahore nd, p. 3-4.
7. G. F. I. Graham, *Life and Work of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, London 1909, p. 32.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-9.
9. I. N. Topa, *The Growth and Development of National Thought in India*, Hamburg, 1930, p. 79.
10. Sir Syed to Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, 18 June 1869, *Khatut-i-Sir Syed*, ed. Ross Masud, Badaon 1931, p. 35

Sir Syed had the satisfaction of knowing that he had served the cause of his countrymen.[1] In 1860, he wrote a series of pamphlets, entitled *The Loyal Mahomedans of India*, in order to dispel the unfavourable impressions official quarters held about the Muslims.[2] He described well-authenticated incidents, during 1857, in which various Muslims had stood by the British even at the peril of their own lives. He argued that the whole community should not be made to pay for the actions of some misguided individuals.[3] On the one hand, he endeavoured to vidnicate Muslim loyalty before the Government and on the other he fostered feelings of loyalty among his co-religionists by presenting the British Crown as a just and benevolent institution.[4]

In the meantime, he had begun to appreciate the value of Western arts and sciences as a means for the salvation of Muslims. Perhaps his realization of this was sharpened by his contact with Nawab Abdul Latif. His visit to Calcutta proved to be the prelude to a programme of educational uplift; and, in this respect, it was no less important than his later visit to England. It appears that Sir Syed was influenced by Nawab Abdul Latif in establishing the Scientific Society at Ghazipur,[5] which was well-received by British officials.[6] The Government made a grant of land to the Society to enable it to set up its offices;[7] and later, the Duke of Argyll extended his patronage to the Society.[8] Non-communal in its aims and organization, the Society published Urdu translations of 25 books on various subjects, ranging from electricity to agriculture.[9] In 1866, Sir Syed started publishing a journal, which later became known as the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*.[10] He utilized this journal to project Government policies among the people, and to present Muslim point of view to the

1. *Ibid.*

2. It was not a pamphlet, as mentioned by Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 58 but a series of pamphlets, as stated by Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

3. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-56.

4. Muhammad Ismail Panipati, *Maqalat-i-Sir Syed*, Lahore 1962, Vol. VIII, pp. 41-42. (Henceforth *Maqalat*).

5. For a fuller discussion, see Chapter III.

6. Kempson was "desirous of co-operating" with Sir Syed in the formation of the Society. Kempson, Director of Public Instruction, N.W. Provinces to Syud Ahmud Khan, 30 September 1863. Auckland Colvin appreciated the "great benefit likely to be derived" from the Society. A. Colvin to Syud Ahmud Khan, 11 October 1863. Yusuf Hussain, *Selected Documents from the Aligarh Archives*, Aligarh 1967, pp. 1-2.

7. Syed Ahmad Khan to J. H. Prinsep, *ibid.*, pp. 48-50 and 61.

8. Syed Ahmad Khan to Duke of Argyll, 15 February 1865, *Ibid.*, p. 74.

9. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

10. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-87.

Government. He thus made the *AIG* an instrument of political awareness and freedom of expression.[1] It displayed an inspiring motto on its front page: "Liberty of the Press is a prominent duty of the Government, and a natural right of the subjects". The small circulation of 343 copies[2] constituted a misleading reflection of its importance; for it reached an influential audience, among which its founder's opinions carried weight. It was esteemed not only by the Muslims, but also by the Hindus and the Government. By 1876, the *AIG* had developed into something of a spokesman for the Muslims of Upper India.

In May 1866, Sir Syed organized a branch of the British Indian Association at Aligarh.[3] Though this was an organization of Hindu and Muslim aristocracy, he did encourage its members stand up boldly for their rights, and urged them to put forward the needs of their countrymen, and place their reactions to the policies of the Government of India, before the Parliament.[4] He represented the political aspirations of both Hindus and Muslims and made no distinction between their common interests.[5] His political ideas reflected democratic values of English political life, and, as such, were more significant than the unimpressive achievements of the Association. He even visualized an Indian Parliament "legislating mainly for the good of the country".[6] He was acquainted with the ideas of John Stuart Mill, whose major work had been translated into Urdu through his initiative.[7] He criticized the Council of India Act, 11 August 1869, and styled it as a "mistake that is indescribable".

> "If such a law was enacted in England, all the people would have petitioned for its repeal".[8]

His visit to England, in 1869, increased his understanding of the British political system, and also deepened his comprehension of English education. Neither his loyalty nor his appreciation of English education

1. *AIG*, 29 December 1876, IOL.
2. *Parliamentary Papers*, J. & P., Vol. 57, 1878, IOL.
3. Hali, *op. cit.*, 181-83.
4. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-83.
6. *AIG*, 1866, p. 399 and p. 664. See also H. K. Sherwani, *Studies in Muslim Political Thought and Administration*, Lahore 1963, p. 255.
7. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
8. Syed Ahmad to Mohsin-ul-Mulk, 20 August 1869, *Khatut-i-Sir Syed*, p. 40.

did ever submerge his Islamic sensibility. He collected research material[1] to refute the accusations Muir had levelled against the Holy Prophet; and in this connection, also sought an exchange of views with Carlyle.[2] Sir Syed was an ardent champion of Islam; and to protect Muslim youth from the onslaught of Western materialism, he sought to harmonize Islam with Western scientific spirit.

He devoted himself to developing a new dialectic, reinterpreting Islam in terms of contemporary scientific language. This was no mean achievement, and despite its controversial nature; his writings on the subject have contributed to the stature of Sir Syed as one of the greatest leaders of Muslim religious awakening during the 19th century. Soon after his return to India, he launched his journal, *Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq*, with the objective of educating Muslim consciousness to the "highest degree of civilization",[3] and bringing about a fundamental religious, moral and social reform.[4] Hali appreciated *Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq* for the influence on Urdu prose and Muslim thinking and compared it with the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* which had influenced English prose and society in a similar manner.[5] At about the same time, Sir Syed began his campaign for Muslim education, and organized the M. A. O. College Fund Committee.[6] Quite apart from the fact that Sir Syed managed to secure official support for his proposed Muslim college,[7] the real success of this enterprise came from his exceptional leadership. Sir Syed's visit to England proved to be no less significant for the Muslims of India than Luther's visit to Rome had been for the Christian Europe.

In 1871, the publication of Hunter's book, *The Indian Musalmans* reopened the controversy about Muslim loyalty to the British in the North-Western Provinces, and the Anglo-Indian press created an anti-Muslim stir in India and England. Sir Syed countered it by writing *Review on Hunter's Indian Musalmans*, and tried to disprove the allegation that rebellion against infidel rule was inherent in the Wahhabi creed. He maintained that Hunter had misconstrued the significance of Wahhabism,

1. His book in Urdu and English, entitled *Khutbat-i-Ahmadiya* was a rejoinder to Muir's *Life of the Prophet*.

2. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to Thomas Carlyle, 5 June 1870, *Carlyle Collection*, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

3. Muhammad Ismail Panipati, *op. cit.*, *Maqalat*, Vol. 10, p. 35.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

5. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-19.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

7. In the early stages of his efforts, he secured the support of Muir and Baring. See Capt. Evelyn Baring to Syed Ahmad Khan, 10 June 1872, and C. W. Muir to Syed Ahmad Khan, 13 June 1872. Yusuf Hussain, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-47.

which was a sect of Islam, as Catholicism and Protestantism were sects of Christianity.[1] He added that Wahhabism was not new in its emphasis on *Tauheed*, which was the quintessence of Islam. He then analysed the struggle of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed against the Sikhs in its historical perspective, challenging Hunter to prove that "the Wahhabis have ever declared *jihad* against the British in India to be lawful".[2] Sir Syed also pointed out that the Pathan tribes were Hanafis, not Wahhabis,[3] and the reasons for their resentment against the British were more economic and political than religious. Though Hunter claimed that his observations pertained to the Muslims of Bengal, the title and tenor of his book conveyed the impression that sedition was rife among Muslims all over the subcontinent. Sir Syed's comment on this point was borne out by *The Pioneer*, which stated that Hunter's allegations of Muslim discontent, "if true, are true only of Lower Bengal".[4] Hunter had ruled out "the hope of enthusiastic loyalty and friendship" from the Muslims, who at best could give their "cold acquiescence"[5] to British rule, Sir Syed retorted:

> "Like begets like; and if cold acquiescence is all that Mahomedans receive at the hands of the ruling race, Dr. Hunter must not be surprised at the cold acquiescence of the Mahomedan community".[6]

But in fact, Sir Syed was not content with any such "cold acquiescence". In order to dispel the Government's apprehension of Muslim disloyalty, and to educate the Muslim public in its obligation of loyalty to the British rule, he cited several *fatwas* of the *Hanafi*, *Shafi'i* and *Maliki muftis* of Mecca to the effect that India could not be regarded as a *Dar-ul-Harb*.[7] He also cited a *fatwa* of the *ulema* of Delhi, Lucknow and Rampur, who had unequivocally stated that "there is no *jihad* in a country where protection is offered to Muslims".[8] His efforts created a favourable impression, not only on English officials, but also on the Anglo-Indian press. An Englishman, perhaps Muir, came out with a rebuttal of Hunter, in *The Pioneer*;[9] *The Indian Observer* also published a refutation of Hunter, and

1. Muhammad Ismail Panipati, *op. cit.*, Vol. 9, p. 131.

2. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Review on Hunter's Indian Mussalmans*, Benares, 1872, p. 43, BM.

3. Muhammad Ismail Panipati, *op. cit.*, Vol. 9, pp. 138-39.

4. *The Pioneer*, November 1871, cited by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Review*, Appendix VII, *op. cit.*, p. xvii.

5. *Review*, *Ibid.*, p. 45.

6. *Ibid.*,

7. *Ibid.*, Appendix I and II.

8. *Ibid.*, Appendix II.

9. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-34. Muir's article was published in *The Pioneer* of 23 December 1871.

commended Sir Syed's *Review*.[1] Some Englishmen also appreciated his *Review* in their private correspondence with him.[2] Many copies of Sir Syed's *Review* were distributed in England, and helped to soothe the feelings ruffled by Hunter's book.[3] These efforts brought him acclaim as a spokesman of his people and a champion of the British rule.[4]

The controversy about India being a *Dar-ul-Harb*, with the consequent Muslim obligation of *jihad* was fraught with deep significance for the Government and for the Muslims. Sir Syed and Nawab Abdul Latif displayed an identity of views on this question that is remarkable both for its simultaneous incidence and for its far reaching results. They argued on religious premises, and their conclusions, though no less juristic and sound, paved the way for a pragmatic political policy, which gave the concept of loyalism a religious sanction. Though Nawab Abdul Latif had taken the lead in this field, Sir Syed was not far behind. The efforts of Nawab Abdul Latif had culminated in the sixth meeting of the Mahomedan Literary Society on 23 November 1870, in which loyalty to the British Crown was sanctified. Sir Syed though already aware of the problem,[5] took the initiative after his return from England on 2 October 1870. Sir Syed's *Review* was published in *The Pioneer* in 1871; and then was serialized in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* from 24 November 1871 to 23 February 1872.[6] It may be inferred that Sir Syed emulated Nawab Abdul Latif; but in fact he took a more independent and juristically correct line than Nawab Abdul Latif. Sir Syed castigated the Mahomedan Literary Society for equating British rule with *Dar-ul-Islam* in its primary sense; and, in this respect, endorsed Hunter's adverse comments on the verdict of the Society.[7] Sir Syed wrote:

> I cannot congratulate the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta on their assertion that India is *Dar-ul-Islam*, and of their evading the necessity of rebellion. India, in spite of the Calcutta Mahomedan

1. Hali, *Ibid.*, pp. 234-36. The editor of *The Indian Observer* wrote a leading article on this question in the issue of 16 March 1872.

2. "I have per chance read your pamphlet ***Review on Doctor Hunter's Indian Mussalmans***; it is very well explained in clear style". W. Connor, Hony. Magistrate Alygurh to Syed Ahmad Khan, 8 July 1872. Yusuf Hussain, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-57.

3. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

5. He learnt about Hunter's articles in *The Pioneer*, during his stay in England in 1869. See Sir Syed to Mohsin-ul-Mulk, 20 August 1869, *op. cit.*

6. *Maqalat-i-Sir Syed, op. cit.*, Vol. 9, p. 125.

7. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Review, op. cit.*, p. 42.

Literary Society, is *Dar-ul-Harb*; but not in the same sense in which Englishman interprets it.[1]

Sir Syed was willing to concur with the Mahomedan Literary Society "if the Society call India *Dar-ul-Islam* in the secondary meaning of the word[2]..". However, his disagreement with the Society was over the sense in which the term *Dar-ul-Islam* was used, and did not imply any divergence from the policy of loyalty to the British rule for Sir Syed and Nawab Abdul Latif had hardly any differences in their political objectives. Nawab Abdul Latif converted the Muslims of Bengal to the philosophy of loyalism, and Sir Syed shaped the thinking of Muslims of the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab along similar lines. Though their influence was not unlimited, and did arouse opposition in some quarters, they were largely successful in evolving a policy of loyalism that gradually assumed a clear political configuration after 1872, when the dust of religious controversy had settled down. For the next three decades, the policy of loyalism pervaded all branches of Muslim national life; and this witnessed its period of the trial and triumph. Sir Syed and Nawab Abdul Latif had initiated a new era in the history of the Muslims of South Asia and its tangible effects began to manifest themselves after 1876.

Sir Syed was a Wahhabi, on his own profession,[3] and Nawab Abdul Latif, a Sunni;[4] and both of them emerged as leaders of the Sunnis, who formed the majority of Muslims in the North-Western Provinces and Bengal. Though both of them identified themselves with the larger interests of Muslims, their leadership nevertheless, did not exclude the possibility of a separate Shia leadership, since the Shias constituted the second largest segment of the Muslim population of the Subcontinent, and in some areas wielded greater power than the Sunnis. While, the Shias formed a majority power in Lucknow and Rampur, they also represented an influential though numerically small, community in the metropolis.[5] Syed Karamat Ali, the custodian of the Mohsin Endowment[6], and Nawab Ameer Ali, the vizier of the former King of Awadh,[7]

1. A letter from Syed Ahmed Khan Bahadur, C. S. I., to the editor of *The Pioneer*, published in the issue of 14 April 1871 cited in *Ibid.*, Appendix V.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

3. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-34.

4. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

5. "The Shias are not numerous, perhaps 5 per cent; but they have some men of high position, such as the King of Awadh and his family and Prince Ferukshah". *Ibid.*, p. 134.

6. "Memoirs of the Late Rt. Hon'ble Syed Ameer Ali," *Islamic Culture*, 1931-32, Hyderabad, Deccan, p. 16, Henceforth *Memoirs*.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

were recognized leaders of the Shia community in Bengal. However, it was not until Syed Ameer Ali, the author of *The Spirit of Islam* laid down new guidelines that the Shia leadership transcended its sectarian bias, and broadened its outlook to form part of the over-all Muslim leadership in the Subcontinent.

Combining his family tradition of Persian and Arabic scholarship with modern English education, Syed Ameer Ali secured his Master of Arts degree in 1868,[1] and helped to translate Syed Karamat Ali's *Makhaz-ul-Uloom*[2] into English. In December 1868, he proceeded to England on a state scholarship, and Lord Mayo gave him letters of introduction to some eminent Englishmen.[3] During his stay in London, he participated in several gatherings of the elite; and through the Fawcetts, imbibed the influence of contemporary Liberalism.[4] In 1871, he became a member of the National Indian Association, founded by Miss Manning;[5] and addressed the London Association in Aid of Social Progress in India, and explained the Muslim position in India.[6] He established contact with such English politicians as Salisbury[7] and Hartington, and met Dadabhoy Naoroji and Sir Syed.[8] His English education had not diminished his Islamic fervour and indeed reinforced it as a reaction against the anti-Islamic prejudice of Christian Europe. Like Sir Syed before him he was deeply touched and stood up against the Western challenge to Islam. It was an interesting coincidence that Sir Syed's *Khutbat-i-Ahmadiya* and Ameer Ali's *The Critical Examination of the Life and Teaching of Mohamed* were born at the same time and in similar circumstances. Ameer Ali wrote this book in 1872 and later developed it into his famous work *The Spirit of Islam*. This remains one of the best known English works on Islam, and projects the image of Islam as a religion of reason and humanity, rather than representing it as an apologia for Islam[9] as some commentators claim. The qualities of fairness, broad-minded tolerance, sympathetic understanding and enlightened refinement distinguished his work and it stood in shining contrast with the

1. K. K. Aziz, *Ameer Ali*, p. 5.
2. "Moulvie Obeyd-Olla Al-Obeydee and Moulvi Ameer Ali", *Makhaz-i-Uloom*, Calcutta, 1867, B.M.
3. *Memoirs*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
5. *Social Progress in India*, p. 27, Tract 526, IOL.
6. *The Times*, London, 16 November 1871.
7. *Memoirs*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-2.

highly controversial and questionable literature about Islam so fashionable in those days.

He was called to the bar in 1873, and returned to India the same year.[1] He resumed legal practice at the Calcutta High Court, and was determined to succeed despite opposition:[2]

> The English solicitors looked upon me as an interloper; the Hindus frankly disliked me; whilst the Moslems considered me a renegade because of the English method of life I had acquired.[3]

But he did not have to wait long to gain recognition, both in his profession and in public life. He was elected a Fellow of the Calcutta University, and was appointed a Lecturer in Muhammadan Law at the Presidency College. In the meantime, he had attracted the attention of Northbrook who showed him "much kindness".[4] Perhaps the Muslim community still looked askance at him for his Western deportment; but he got an opportunity to establish his identity with the interests of his community when he was nominated to the Bengal Legislative Council. He visited Bihar "and ascertained personally the views of Muslims of those parts",[5] on the Kazi Bill. By 1875, he was on the road to leadership which later found fulfilment in the establishment and activities of the Central National Mahomedan Association.[6]

There was little contradiction between the personal interests of the leaders and the larger interests of Muslim India, which they harmonized into a process of self-fulfilment. Thus emerged a new pattern of leadership in which dynamism sprang from the personality of the leader. This explains the personalized character of Muslim political organizations which flourished or faded with the career of the leader. The Central National Mahomedan Association declined when Ameer Ali left its leadership to others.[7]

Like the Hindu leaders, the Muslims also managed to combine their leadership with their official position. The Government permitted the combination of communal or regional leadership with public office, and continued to be well-disposed to this practice till 1893. Accordingly, on

1. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
5. *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Bengal*, 20 March, 1875, *Government of India, Legislative Proceedings*, January-March 1876, Vol. 1016, IOL.
6. Memoirs, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
7. *Moslem Chronicle*, 3 October 1903, IOL.

Sir Syed Ahmad's request, the Government of the Punjab allowed its Muslim officers to become "corresponding members of the Mahomedan Educational Conference with a view to aiding the Conference in its inquiries as to the state of Mahomedan Education in each District of the Punjab."[1] Officials were not only encouraged to act as leaders at district level, but were also elevated to the Legislative Councils in accordance with their capacity. Yet official recognition, however important, had limited validity, as it could not invest every Nawab or Khan Bahadur with the mantle of leadership. Titles could, after all, not provide a passport to leadership. There was no dearth of titled aristocrats among Muslims but only a very few of them were able to gain the confidence and respect of their community. In this situation, Sir Syed, Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali epitomized the noblest tradition of the Muslim society of those days. British administrators knew that the titled officials and aristocrats who fawned upon them "were not the representatives of the nation in any sense."[2] Since the Government regarded the political leader as a link between the ruler and the ruled, it did not pitchfork every Muslim official, however brilliant, to the top as a leader. Government recognition presupposed a consensus of Muslim approval, so that Government assessment of a leader's possible usefulness was tempered by the esteem in which he was held by his own people. Sir Syed's services to the Government were a means to achieving a revitalization of enfeebled Muslims. Despite all the constraints Muslim leaders never forgot that nation was the real source of their strength. Sir Syed considered leadership to be a national duty, rather than a matter of personal honour which was meaningless if the nation itself did not command respect. National honour was not possible without feelings of national sympathy.[3] Lytton evaluated Sir Syed's services in the following words:

> "Now Syed Ahmad Khan is, I do not hesitate to say, the most distinguished, the most loyal, and the most usefully influential member of the whole Mahomedan community of India. He has, in an independent capacity, rendered many and valuable services to the Government, and done in various ways an immense deal of practical good, in reconciling, by his influence and example, the higher classes of his own

1. Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, 24 June 1893, *No. 345/6, File No. 157, Home Department (General) 'B' Proceedings Nos. 8/9 of July 1893,* Record Office, Lahore.

2. J. J. S. Cotton, *New India,* London 1886, p. 12.

3. *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's speech in Lahore about the Madrassat-ul-Uloom, Tract No. 538/87,* p. 2, IOL.

countrymen, and co-religionists to the general policy of the British Raj."[1]

This is a verdict confirmed by history. Generally, high appointments were given to balance one community against the other. Ripon considered Syed Mahmud "too much Europeanised for the taste of the strict followers of the Prophet;"[2] but was not prepared to replace him by a Hindu advocate on the Bench for he thought that, that was "not a moment at which to give Mahomedans a cause for grumbling".[3]

Later, Nawab Abdul Latif was recommended for the Order of the British Empire in appreciation of his services both to the Government and his own community.

> "He has worked much for the Mahomedan education and progress, and in many ways has co-operated with Government in introduction of useful reforms."[4]

When the Government needed support for the Bengal Rent Bill, Ripon asked Bayley about Ameer Ali's qualifications for nomination to the Legislative Council.[5] Bayley obtained O'Kinealy's opinion about Ameer Ali and forwarded it to Ripon:

> "Mr. Amir Ali is the chief and influential member of the Mahomedan National Association. This Society represents the enlightened Mahomedan opinion of Bengal. In regard to the second question, whether he would represent fairly and well the views of the ryots, I think I may safely say 'yes'. Indeed I am so sure of it that I can guarantee he will identify himself, as he has done, with the just claims of the cultivators."[6]

Ashley Eden recommended Nawab Ahsan Ullah Khan of Dacca for a seat in the Council, and wrote:—

> "A very rich man, a large landed proprietor, liberal and public spirited, much respected, and a very good English scholar. It might

1. Lytton to Couper, 27 February 1879, *Letters Despatched*, *Lytton Collection*, Henceforth *LYC*, IOL.

2. Ripon to Hartington, 31 August 1882, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State*, *Ripon Collection*, Henceforth *RC*, BM.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Primrose, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, to Hobart, Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for India, 20 November 1882, *Correspondence in England*, *RC*, BM.

5. From Bayley, *Member*, *Viceroy's Council*, to Ripon, 30 January 1883, *Correspondence in India*, *RC*, BM

6. O'Kinealy, Judge of the Bengal High Court, to Bayley, 30 January, 1883, *Correspondence in India*, *RC*, *op. cit.*

seem to you well to put a Mahomedan into the Council."[1]

In 1891, Elliot recommended him for the award of a C. I. E. and wrote:

> "He is the recognised leader of Mahomedan Society in Eastern Bengal, a man of princely liberality, of great intelligence, and of a charming and simple character."[2]

Lansdowne commended Nawab Ahsan Ullah's role in the controversy over the Age of Consent Bill and considered his nomination to the Council as a "valuable accession".[3]

These observations suggest that the Loyalist Muslim leaders were men of intelligence and experience who had the capacity to pursue loyal policies without prejudice to individual or national self-respect. In this context their loyalty had a larger connotation, as it implied mixed loyalties to the Crown and to the interests of the Muslim nation, which were not necessarily congruent with each other. For them, loyalty did not imply the sacrifice or subordination of Muslim interests to Government policies; it meant finding a way to influence Government, through informed opinion and organized representation, in favour of adopting or modifying policies to suit the welfare of Muslims. Of course, they interpreted Government policies in terms of goodwill to their co-religionists. They thought that a satisfied Muslim nation was the best guarantee for the stability of the British Raj;[4] and this view found its fulfilment in beneficial co-operation with the Government. Loyalty was also an exercise in building up proper political thinking. Sir Syed refuted the common belief that loyalty implied praising Government for all its actions, good or bad. Such an expression of loyalty that was ready to explain away the unfair acts of Government, he said, was in reality an act of disloyalty. In the same manner, love for one's own nation did not mean that one should ignore the good points of others, and always defend one's own people, even if they were in the wrong. He thought that real sympathy for the Government meant that it should be informed and made aware of the feelings of the people, and that the people should be kept informed of the intentions of Government.[5] This attitude explains Sir Syed's independence and dignity[6] in his dealings

1. Ashley Eden to Ripon, 10 February 1881, *Correspondence in India, RC, op. cit.*, Vol. 1.

2. Elliot to Lansdowne, 17 March 1891, *Correspondence in India, Lansdowne Collection*, Henceforth *LAC*, BM.

3. Lansdowne to Cross, 18 April 1891, *Ibid.*

4. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

5. *AIG*, 26 March 1875, IOL.

6. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 378-80.

with individual Englishmen. He staged a walkout when he found that Indians were not being treated on an equal footing with the English in the Agra Exhibition.[1] Apart from such acts of individual protest, he did not hesitate to take a stand against Government policies that he considered harmful. In 1858, Sir Syed lashed out against the policy of keeping Indians out of Government. Since he was convinced that traditional learning was no longer compatible with Muslim progress; he opposed the scheme for establishing an Oriental University in Lahore; and his campaign in the press was largely responsible for the abandonment of this scheme.[2] Nawab Abdul Latif expressed his anguish at the misuse of the Mohsin Trust funds, and strove to get this Trust restored to the Muslims. Ameer Ali often criticized Government policies in the English press, and incurred the displeasure of the Lieut. Governor of Bengal for highlighting excesses of British rule. Though they often disagreed and criticized Government, they had, of necessity, to keep their dissent within legal and constitutional limits, for the Government was not ready to brook any organized Indian opposition. The very fact that despite being Government nominees, they could still stand up against the Government for Muslim rights shows that they had Muslim interests at heart. However it cannot be denied that some of the lesser leaders did not hesitate to promote their individual interests and family fortunes as a price for their loyalty.

The Muslim political scene from 1876 to 1892 was thus dominated by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab, and by Nawab Abdul Latif and Ameer Ali in Bengal. The backing received from Muslim majority areas enabled them to spread their influence to Muslim minority provinces as well. The popular support for strength and dynamism of Muslim leadership sprang mainly from the areas which originally constituted Pakistan. Blunt observed "the strong hold of Mahomedan India is the North-West, and there Islam is far from hopeless or disposed to perish."[3] The vocal Muslim minority in N. W. Provinces being vigorous formed a bridge between the Punjab and Bengal. Muslim minorities in other provinces found their own leadership which identified itself with the policies of the leaders of Bengal, North West Provinces and the Punjab. It was a mutually complementary process which resulted in the creation of a general Muslim consensus in political

1. Hali, *Ibid.*, pp. 405-07.
2. *Maqalat, Ibid.*, pp. 42-50. See also Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 461-73.
3. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

affairs. Since Muslims all over India shared one another's weal and woe as one nation it enabled the leaders of Muslim minority provinces to act as spokesmen for the whole of Muslim India. Sir Syed stood forth not only as the leader of a Muslim provincial minority but of a countrywide Muslim minority as well. He brought to bear his knowledge and experience of Hindu majority of N. W. Provinces in dealing with the issues involving the Hindu majority on an all-India basis. The defence of Urdu in 1867 and the rejection of the Indian National Congress, were manifestations of the same mental process. Nawab Abdul Latif and Ameer Ali shared his apprehensions of a Hindu majority taking over in the event of a transfer of power to Indians. Despite a Muslim majority in the Punjab and eastern areas of Bengal, Muslim politics was naturally dictated by the disadvantages of being minority in the Subcontinent as a whole and consequently was defensive in character.

After the establishment of the Indian National Congress, a new trend emerged in Muslim leadership. The pro-Congress Muslims were represented by men like Badruddin Tyabji and Congress strategies and tactics worked to build up Badruddin Tyabji as a counterpoise to Sir Syed and Ameer Ali. There thus developed a conflict between Sir Syed and Badruddin Tyabji that symbolised two divergent schools of thought in Muslim politics. Though the trio of Muslim leadership was opposed to the Indian National Congress, their unanimity in opposition did not preclude mutual differences on certain political issues. They often criticized each other, and aired their disagreement in public and before the Government. Sir Syed disapproved Nawab Abdul Latif's contention that India was a *Dar-ul-Islam*.[1] Nawab Abdul Latif attacked the policies of Sir Syed at a public meeting in Calcutta.[2] He also expressed his antipathy for Ameer Ali and Ameer Husain whom he described as "worshippers of nature."[3] Ameer Ali had no social relations with Nawab Abdul Latif; and their mutual discord was reflected in their politics. Nawab Abdul Latif wrote a note of dissent to the Government on the Memorial of the Central National Mahomedan Association.[4] Ameer Ali admired Sir Syed; but after a dispute over the question of a Muslim political organization,[5] the disposition of their relations changed from cordiality to indifference. And Sir Syed made no secret of his aversion for Badruddin Tyabji.[6]

1. Syed Ahmed Khan Bahadur, C. S. I., to the Editor, *The Pioneer* of 14 April, 1871.
2. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
4. Nawab Abdul Latif, *On the Present Condition of Indian Mahomedans*, BM.
5. Syed Ameer Ali, *Memoirs*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.
6. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to the editor of *The Pioneer*, cited by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Present Condition of India*, pp. 57-62.

Every leader in his own way represented a facet of the cultural personality of Muslim nation, and had his own appeal for certain sections of Muslim society. Nawab Abdul Latif did not permit his English education to alter his traditional way of life. A man of swarthy complexion, slim and supple figure, with a fine head and dark lustrous eyes,[1] he looked impressive in his traditional white robes and turban. He used this dress even in English company, though he had given up the use of *'itr* and *pan*[2] in deference to an English dislike for these things. In contrast, Sir Syed began to wear a modified version of the tailcoat worn by the English aristocracy and the red fez which he adopted from the Turks.[3] He had no English education, but after his return from England he became a hot gospler of Western civilization. He filled the pages of *Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq* with jibes at various Indian social customs,[4] and urged Indians to adopt English education and manners, so that they might not be looked down upon as inferior by civilized nation.[5] In personal appearance, Sir Syed was majestic: his leonine pink face, with flowing white beard and bright eyes reflected his inner greatness,[6] and his tall heavy frame rendered him conspicuous in any group of men.[7] Ameer Ali combined his English education with English dress and ways of life to the extent that he married an English lady and perhaps in deference to her wishes, settled in England.[8] Ameer Ali concealed a Muslim spirit under his Western exterior. On the other hand, Badruddin Tyabji, though educated in England for seven and a half years,[9] continued to wear a beard and a golden turban in the style of the Bohras. His manner of life represented a blend of Indian and Western traditions and attitudes. These differences in living style were indicative of varying degrees to which Western customs and manners were accepted by different sections of society. A leader's adoption of Western modes of living was not just his personal concern; for it often became a subject of national interest, as in the case of Sir Syed, who considered it lawful to eat the meat of fowls slaughtered by

1. *Reis and Rayyat*, 15 July 1893, cited in *Nawab Bahadur Abdul Latif*, p. 288.
2. *Ibid.*, (wearing of strong perfume and chewing of betel leaves).
3. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 781.
4. *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, Vol. III, Muharram 1289 A.H.
5. *Mazameen-i-Sir Syed*, Vol. II, pp. 1-6.
6. Ḥali, *op. cit.*, p. 778.
7. *Ibid*, pp. 779-80.
8. K. K. Aziz, *Ameer Ali; His Life and Work*, p. 13.
9. Husain B. Tyabji, *Badruddin Tyabji, A Biography*, p. 24.

Christians.[1] Like the kings of England, the Muslim leaders had to live up to religious ideal of a defender of the faith. That the private life of a leader was his personal affair without any public or national significance, was repugnant to the norms of the Muslim society that had refused to accept the norms of European individualism. The success or failure of a leader was not entirely due to his policies and their effectiveness, but to some extent also depended on his capacity to foster leadership at lower levels. The public response evoked by these great leaders was achieved through their independence of spirit, and not as a result of Government favours. They inspired, and attracted bands of dedicated followers, who formed a nucleus of second-rank leaders, climbing to prominence in their own right in due course of time. In this respect, Sir Syed outshone his peers, and was able to gather round himself a galaxy of able men like Mohsin-ul-Mulk[2] and Viqar-ul-Mulk,[3] who kept alive the movement started by their mentor. Syed Ameer Ali commanded the allegiance of persons like Syed Ameer Husain,[4] Syed Hassan Ali Effendi[5] and Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf;[6] Nawab Abdul Latif also enjoyed the co-operation of notables like the princes of the Mysore family. However, the followers of Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali were not able to maintain the dynamism of organizations founded by their leaders.

The emergence of Muslim leadership followed the progress of Pax Brittanica in Northern India as the areas that first came under British rule were also those in which such leadership originated. Historically, they had more time to adjust to British rule and take advantage of benefits of an English education. But this view is only partly valid. Though Bengal was the first to be incorporated in the British Dominion, the Bengali Muslim was also the first to suffer, and suffered most, from the consequences of British rule. The exclusion of Muslim jagirdars from the new system of revenue collection and the introduction of English revenue collectors, "were the first great blows dealt at their political position."[7] At the same

1. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 858. Christians killed fowls by twisting their necks, and this method runs counter to the Muslim method of slaughtering animals and birds.

2. He became the Secretary of M. A. O. College after the death of Sir Syed.

3. He followed Mohsin-ul-Mulk in the secretaryship of M. A. O. College.

4. He became the Secretary of the Central National Mahomedan Association after Ameer Ali was appointed a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council.

5. He was the founder of the Sind Madrassa, Karachi.

6. He was a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

7. Syed Ameer Ali, "A Cry from the Indian Mahomedans". *The Nineteenth Century*, August 1882, p. 195.

time, "the Mahomedans of these provinces, as a community, became completely ruined"[1] as a result of British economic policies. The aristocracy, which could have given a lead to the people, was eliminated; so that little scope was left for any effective exercise of the traditional type of leadership. But a different policy was adopted for the North Western provinces,[2] where a segment of Muslim aristocracy did survive the process of piecemeal extension of British authority. Though the Muslim nobility was broken up in the aftermath of the uprising of 1857, it was not completely destroyed.[3] The Government rewarded its loyal supporters by awarding them titles and jagirs sometimes comprising several villages.[4] It is evident that an infrastructure of a new aristocracy had emerged to furnish an edifice for a new feudal leadership in the North-Western Provinces. For the Muslims of these Provinces, the intellectual traditions of Delhi and Lucknow and of lesser centres of culture and learning, were tangibly present, rather being memories of the past, as in the case of their brethren in Bengal and the Punjab. As a result of this cultural continuity, the North-Western Muslims had acquired a higher level of education and employment; they possessed wealth and influence enough to hold their own against the majority. Perhaps, as a minority, they had come to realize that, in the changed circumstances after 1857, their survival as a privileged community lay in their identification with the larger national interests of Muslims in other parts of India.

The Muslims of the Punjab presented a different picture. The Sikhs devastated Lahore in 1764, and ravaged the country between Sutlej and Attock.[5] They were not content with making Sikhism supreme;[6] they unleashed a revanchist policy towards the Muslims, who were thereby reduced to the position of agricultural labourers.[7] The Sikhs pulverized the Muslims as political power, ruined their prosperity and dispersed them as a religious community.[8] Shah Abdul Aziz lamented their miserable

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 197-8.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Maqalat*, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 42, 67, 72, 76, 118, 137, 158, 189, 191.
5. "Jahan-i-Kharab Shuda" i.e. A world devastated' was his chronogram for this disaster. Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, reprint, Lahore, n.d., p. 287.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
8. 'They were persecuted in every conceivable manner, their mosques desecrated and turned into pigsties, and their men into swineherds. The grandest of their shrines were utilizedas magazines and arsenals. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

plight, in some poignant Arabic verses.[1] When the British conquered the Punjab in 1849, they gave recognition to the Sikh aristocracy:

> "The British Government did all it consistently could do to mitigate the reverses of the feudal nobility of the defunct Sikh realm."[2]

The Government protected their hereditary claims to land, which had originated in Muslim deprivation. The Sikhs were allowed the custody and income of their holy places, while in contrast, the mosques continued to suffer desecration. Although the Badshahi Mosque of Lahore was nominally resorted to the Muslim in 1856,[3] and Muslims of the Punjab expressed their gratitude to the Government,[4] it continued to stand as a half-ruined monument till the end of 19th century. The Idgah in Multan, which had been closed in 1848 owing to no fault of the local Muslims, was restored in 1863.[5] The Golden Mosque of Lahore, when released by the Government in 1875, was "lying in a dilapidated state."[6] In Ludhiana, one mosque was occupied by the sweepers of the Municipality, and the other was annexed by a Christian Mission School.[7] In 1876, the Wahhabis of the Punjab complained about their exclusion from Government appointments and about interference in the performance of their religious duties, while praying for justice from courts.[8] Obviously the Government policy during this time was based on the tactics of weakening and impoverishing Muslims in their majority areas. The pro-Sikh policy had paid off during the mutiny when 7,000 Sikh troops, sent by the Rajas of Patiala, Jhind and Nabha, helped the British to subdue Delhi.[9] The revolts at Lahore, Sialkot, Jhelum, Multan, Hazara[10] and Ludhiana[11]

1. Shah Abdul Aziz said, "They have killed many a creature of God and have not even spared the shepherds and illiterate persons." In a letter, he wrote, "They are greedy for wealth and for that many an orphan have they thrown in prison. Manazar Ahsan Gilani, *Tazkira-i-Hazrat Shah Wali Ullah*, Karachi, 1952, pp. 37-39.

2. Syed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 575.

3. Syed Muhammad Latif, *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities* (1892 edition), p. 115.

4. Muhammad Baqir, *Lahore*: *Past and Present*, pp. 333-334.

5. Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 586.

6. *Khair-Khwah-i-Alam*, 21 January 1876, *N. W. P. Newspaper Reports*, 1876, IOL.

7. *Khair-Khwah-i-Hind*, 16 November 1884, *N. W. P. Newspaper Reports*, 1884, IOL.

8. *AIG*, 29 December, 1876, IOL.

9. Muhammad Syad, Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 579.

10. "Mostly Mahomedans, the people of that tract and the adjoining hills, had been tempted by the long successful resistance of Delhi to plot the downfall of their English masters." Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 211.

11. Muslim Gujjars, were the people "who had been wrought up to a high state of fanaticism by the preachings of an energetic Maulvi, and who were eager to declare a *Jihad* against us." *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 380.

essentially constituted a Muslim uprising. Since the Sikhs feared that the success of the uprising might mean that the Muslims would again become "dominant in Upper India," they decided "to cast their lot. . .with the British."[1] The Sikhs also enabled the British to keep their communications open with Punjab and Peshawar.[2] The Sikh refusal to join the Muslims in their struggle against the British, though symptomatic of their old antagonism, also meant that in the Punjab the Muslims had to contend with Sikhs as well as with Hindus. The Muslim-Sikh problem was peculiar only to Punjab politics. As they stood low in Government estimation, first the Sikhs and later the Hindus outstripped[3] them in wealth and education; there was hardly any sound basis for the growth of leadership among Muslims of the Punjab. Muslim landlords of the Punjab devoid of education and pawns in the hands of Hindu money-lenders, were the least qualified to give a lead to Muslims at large. In the Punjab, much of the backwardness of the people was thus due to a lack of good leaders.[4] The Muslim rural communities were backward all over the Subcontinent but it was particularly marked in villages and towns of Punjab. If Lahore was backward in comparison with Calcutta or Delhi, so was Peshawar in comparison with Lahore. Ever since the conquest of the Punjab, the territories beyond the Attock had formed an appendix of the Punjab administration.[5] The Punjab Government was reluctant to extend English education for fear of arousing opposition in an area which was still a sensitive frontier. This consideration, though justified from the British imperial viewpoint, resulted in creating a gap between the educational level of the people on either side of the Indus.

By 1876, economic developments had begun to change the face of the Punjab, and their impact was fondly compared to the modernization of Japan.[6] Lahore developed into a hub of railway communications, and irrigation canals began to be extended to arid area of the province.[7] Lahore also regained its intellectual tradition with the establishment of *Anjuman-i-Punjab* in 1865. This *Anjuman*, though founded by Leitner, "with the co-operation of the native gentlemen of the city"[8] soon grew into an inter-communal body, which evinced interest in the problems and

1. *Ibid.*, p. 316.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 384.
3. Syad Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 630.
4. H. Calvert, *The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab*, p. 67.
5. L. Fraser, *India Under Curzon and After*, p. 55.
6. *The Indian Public Opinion and The Punjab Times*, 3 January 1877, IOL.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 29 December 1877, *Supplement*, 12 January 1877, IOL. Leitner was the principal of Oriental College, Lahore.

welfare of the people in general. It held meetings to create interest in English Education and became Leitner's instrument for the proposed Oriental University.[1] At that time, Sir Syed joined issue with Leitner on the usefulness of Oriental education for the people of the Punjab. He warned Muslims of the Punjab that Oriental education would bar them from progress and deprive them of their rights; for they would then remain ignorant of their rights and therefore unable to fight for them.[2] This controversy introduced Sardar Muhammad Hayat Khan and Khan Bahadur Barkat Ali Khan to the ideas of Sir Syed Ahmad. It was perhaps under their influence that the *Anjuman-i-Punjab*, in 1871, submitted a memorial to the Government for the extension of English education in the Punjab.[3] However, when in 1872, the Government asked the *Anjuman* why Muslims did not avail themselves of the opportunities for education provided by the Government, the majority of the *Anjuman's* membership responded with the statement that since the "population of the country consisted for the most part of tradesmen and men of professions"[4] they were averse to education. In 1876, the *Anjuman* advised the Government against the proposal to introduce the Roman alphabet for Urdu.[5] Though the *Anjuman* was non-communal in character, Muslim gentlemen did exercise their influence as representatives of their community. In 1870, Sardar Muhammad Hayat Khan was elected Honorary Life Secretary; and in 1874, Khan Bahadur Barkat Ali became its Secretary.[6] The Muslim leadership soon discarded the Orientalist outlook of Leitner, and freed itself from the non-committal policies of the *Anjuman* on Muslim problems. The years after 1876 saw Muslim leaders of the Punjab pass through a significant transition in their political outlook.

While the Punjabi Muslims had begun to show signs of political awareness as a result of English education, a similar awakening among the Pathans across the Indus was delayed. This time lag was not merely due to their distance from the provincial capital. In reality, the socio-political condition of the tribes, combined with the military goals of the Forward Policy, had conditioned the civil administration to curb progress in this area. Ever since the conquest of the Punjab, Government policy had been directed towards eliminating the Wahhabi influence from the

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Maqalat*, Vol. VIII, p. 38.
3. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Supplement, 12 January 1877, *op. cit.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*

Frontier. In 1858, the Government took "vigorous action"[1] against the *Mujahidin* at Narinji. The British considered the Wahhabi stronghold at Malka "a very dangerous neighbour for our Fronteir tribes,"[2] and the Ambela campaign launched against them in 1863 proved significant in two ways: firstly, British arms succeeded in destroying the Wahhabi base, and secondly, this victory enabled the British to secure the co-operation of the Khataks, Yusufzais and Afridis against their own brethren.[3] After the Second Afghan War (1878-80), the Government sought to tighten its control over the tribes; and Lord Roberts decried the policy of non-interference in this region as "not altogether worthy of a great civilizing power."[4] Consequent British encroachments on tribal freedom roused the tribes to a *Jihad* "against the infidel Christian power that was threatening to absorb all independent Mahomedan territory."[5] In 1897, a rebellion erupted among the tribes from Swat to Tirah. The tribes saw "themselves fighting for a freedom never yet lost."[6] This sentiment kept the tribal resistance alive; and the Government naturally felt that its primary duty lay in the pacification rather than the development of the Frontier. This explains why, while the Government established a University College at Lahore in 1868,[7] and raised it to a University in 1882,[8] it delayed setting up the Islamia College in Peshawar till 1913.[9] Though the Government had been conscious of the unsatisfactory administration of the Frontier region, it was not until 1901 that a separate North-West Frontier Province was created.[10] Later, Roos Keppel began "to associate Mussulmans of good families more closely with executive duties."[11] It was in these circumstances that Sahibzada Sir Abdul Qayyum emerged as a leader of his people in the first quarter of the 20th century.

The conquest of Sind in 1841 brought in its wake nothing but deprivation for the Muslims. The British had begun to appreciate the strategic importance of Sind from the beginning of the 19th century and coveted

1. Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957*, p. 364.
2. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XL, 1864, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-26, IOL.
3. Olaf Caroe, *op. cit.*, p. 367.
4. P. E. Roberts, *History of British India, under the Company and the Crown*, p. 489. Lord Roberts led the British armies to victory during the Second Afghan War.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 511.
6. Olaf Caroe, *op. cit.*, p. 366.
7. Syad Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 590-91.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 602.
9. Olaf Caroe, *op. cit.*, p. 424.
10. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew it*, pp. 104-105.
11. Lovat Fraser, *India Under Curzon and After*, pp. 61-62.

the command of the Indus as an enterance to the Arabian Sea and for its approaches to the Punjab and Afghanistan.[1] In order to turn these strategic factors to their own benefit for the mastery of Northern India, the British applied the squeeze on the Ameers of Sind. The Ameers agreed to grant them certain concessions, but when the situation became galling, one of the Ameers sought Persian help to contend with the British, who in their imperial logic construed it as the manifestation of "unfriendly spirit towards the British Government."[2] The Ameers till then had clung to illusion of their safety and "the notion of a British force permanently occupying any part of those territories had never entered their minds".[3] But Napier had decided to annex Sind even at the risk of perdition. Sind was incorporated into Bombay Presidency in 1843. This arrangement did little justice to the Muslim majority of Sind, which was completely subordinated to the Hindu majority of Bombay. "During the reign of the Ameers, and for some time afterwards, the official language in Sind was Persian, and all the high posts in the public service were occupied by Mahomedans,..."[4] The British then replaced Persian by Sindhi;[5] and, as a result, many educated Muslims were thrown out of employment, and the administration of Sind became a monopoly of the Hindu and the Parsi. The Government rejected the old Muslim system of education, and thereafter made little effort to spread English education. In Sind, "change after change followed in rapid succession; so that, in the course of a short period, no trace of the old native administration remained, nor was there time, and but few opportunities, for the natives to qualify themselves for the new regime".[6] Sind continued to be the backyard of the Bombay Presidency. The Muslims, who numbered the most also suffered the most, till by 1880, the Muslims of Sind had become "entirely illiterate."[7] Deprived of their past and unprepared for the future, they sank into ignorance and poverty. Such circumstances were evidently not conducive to the growth of a new Muslim leadership in Sind. The historic *Meer* and *Peer* families stood rooted in old grooves of tradition

1. Edward Thornton, *History of the British Empire in India*, London, 1863, Vol. VI, p. 400.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 406.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 408.

4. Khan Bahadur Kazi Shahabudin, C. I. E., "Education among the Mahomedans of the Bombay Presidency, Statements Relating to the Bombay Education Commission", *Bombay Education Commission Report*, Vol. II, *1884*, p. 57.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

6. *Ibid.*

7. "Cross-examination of Lee-Warner", *Bombay Education Commission Report*, Vol. II, p. 507.

and feudal privilege, and even though patronised by the Government showed little aptitude for taking up role of popular Muslim leadership. The interests of Muslims of Sind were therefore generally represented by their better educated co-religionists in Bombay. In its memorial to the Education Commission, the *Anjuman-i-Islam*, Bombay pointed out that, according to the Report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1880-81, out of a total of 19,965 pupils learning English only 795 were Muslims.[1] Thus, while the Muslims constituted a majority in Sind, in comparison with the Hindus, their education bore an inverse ratio to the size of their population. By 1881, Karachi had emerged as the premier city of Sind, "a creation of British rule",[2] it soon developed into the "principal port of North-Western India",[3] Though Muslims outnumbered the other communities[4] in Karachi they still remained a backward section of the population. Nevertheless Karachi did become the urban centre for Muslims of Sind; and there arose such gentlemen as Hasan Ali Effendi, who collaborated with Syed Ameer Ali and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to promote Western education among local Muslims.[5] The establishment of the Sind *Madrasah-tul-Islam* was the first step in the political awakening of Muslims of Sind.

Sind became the springboard for the annexation of Baluchistan, when the Khan of Kalat signed the Mastung Agreement on 13 July 1875, and the British Government assumed responsibility "as the paramount power, of preserving the peace of the country..."[6] Salisbury advised Lytton "to keep order up to the foot of hills, and perhaps up to the pass as well."[7] Another treaty was signed in December 1876, which further strengthened British control over Baluchistan. The Agent to the Governor General administered Baluchistan as an area of special responsibility, and only a selected number of laws and institutions of British India were made applicable to Baluchistan, which continued to be ruled through tribal chiefs and *jirgas*.[8] Baluchistan was kept socially isolated, politically backward and economically depressed. Agriculture was an exception in

1. Memorials relating to the Bombay Education, *Bombay Education Commission Report*, Vol. II, pp. 11-14.

2. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XV, p. 14.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

4. According to the 1901 census, the Muslims numbered 60,008 in total population of 116,663. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

5. Syed Ameer Ali, "*Memoirs*", *Islamic Culture*, 1932, p. 56.

6. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. VI, p. 280.

7. Salisbury to Lytton, 12 May 1876, *Secretary of State to the Viceroy*, Vol. I, LTC.

8. *The Imperial Gazetter of India*, Vol. VI, p. 316.

this arid area of 81,632 square miles, and as late as 1901, supported only a population of 810,476, or less than 10 persons per square mile.[1] There were no large urban communities, and 95 per cent of the population lived in villages that were scattered at an average distance of about 47 miles from each other.[2] The nomadic social structure was not conducive to the spread of education or political activity. Indeed, education made such slow progress that in 1901 there were no more than 434 Muslim children, including 28 girls, receiving instruction, and out of these only 227 were indigenous children.[3] Though the people were mostly Muslims, there was "a general ignorance of tenets of the faith.[4] They neglected trade which was "almost entirely conducted by Hindus from India..."[5] Thus, during the 19th century, Baluchistan neither possessed the political institutions nor the socio-economic infrastructure in which a new leadership might have had a chance to emerge.

Muslim leadership in the Subcontinent accordingly reflected the strength and weakness of the society from which it arose. Contemporary Muslim society, instead of conforming to the Islamic concept of a classless society, was riddled with sectarian divisions undermining the strength and unity of the Indian Muslims. The Sunni-Shia schism was an old discordant factor, which had been accentuated by the 18th century struggle, for power between Turani and Irani nobles. Except for the shortlived Sunni-Shia alliance against the Marhattas,[6] the two sects remained at logger heads and failed to stand together against the British the way they had against the Marhattas. Their alliance during the uprising again proved transient; and after 1858, the Sunni-Shia controversy developed into a polemics of mutual denunciation. The British administrator tended to consider the Shias to be more pliable and less of a political danger than the Sunnis. Being a minority, the Shias were better organised, and made greater headway in acquiring an English education than the Sunni majority; and this, in turn, enabled them to assess their political future under British rule. They began to appreciate, that bereft of support from Sunni majority, they would remain politically insignificant. Similarly, educated Sunnis also came to realize that national interests transcended sectarian disputation and that only a strong Sunni-Shia alliance could face up to the Hindus and the British. In their unity lay the hope of a

1. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 337.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
6. Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *Shuja-ud-Daulah*, Calcutta 1939, Vol. I, p. 90.

new political destiny for the Muslim India. Both the groups began to grow out of their shells, forging a new Muslim outlook. Sir Syed was a pioneer in this field as well, as he brought the two sects together in the cause of Muslim education. Both Sunnis and Shias were accorded recognition in separate committees set up to formulate syllabi on religious education;[1] and scholarships were fixed for students of both the sects.[2] On the occasion of the opening of the M. A. O. School, Maulvi Chiragh Ali, the Secretary of the Shia Education Committee, remarked:

> "Today we congratulate the Shias, as with the establishment of this Madrassa, there are bright signs of their future, progress and honour, and we thank the Foundation Committee of the *Madrassa-tul-Uloom* for considering both the sects on an equal level."[3]

In reply, Maulvi Sami Ullah, the Sunni representative said:

> "If we allow the undue prejudices to persist between the Shias and Sunnis, what would befall us? We are weak, we are poor, we are smaller in numbers, and if the Shias let the Sunnis sink, or the Sunnis let the Shias drown, then both of us would be destroyed. But I declare with great pleasure that in this national task the Shias and Sunnis have been co-operating on equal terms. And in this is a sign of our success, for we are one at heart."[4]

This change of heart was also evident among the Muslims of Bengal, where the Sunnis and Shias in 1875 held a joint meeting to consider the Kazi Bill.[5] Ameer Ali, who represented the Shias in this meeting, later sought to unite the Sunnis and Shias in a common political organization. The sporadic Sunni-Shia flare-ups seldom vitiated the unity of Muslim political outlook. An optimum measure of Shia-Sunni cooperation was maintained on a national level;[6] and this added a new dimension to Muslim politics and leadership. Though considered heterodox by some, Sir Sye dprojected the Muslim national point of view, irrespective of sectarian prejudices, and Ameer Ali, though a Shia, promoted a common Muslim outlook in political matters.

1. *AIG*, 28 May 1875, IOL.
2. Syed Ahmad Khan, *Tariqa-i-Intizam wa Silsala-i-Taleem-o-Tarbiat*, Tract 538/30, p. 5 and 24, IOL.
3. *AIG*, 28 May 1875, IOL.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *AIG*, 3 March 1875, Sir Syed also supported this move. see *AIG*, 28 May 1875, IOL.
6. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 63 and 72.

The Muslim society exhibited an extreme form of socio-economic polarity: on either side of the social scale, stood the very rich and the very poor, without any substantial middle class to hold the balance between them.[1] In fact, though theoretically equalitarian, Muslim society, was split into a caste system of privilege. The rich and the poor had become almost stratified into castes on Hindu prototypes:

> "Even the Mahomedan community is largely influenced by caste practices derived from its long contact with the Hindoo system".[2]

It also suited the British Government to establish 'internal order' on the basis of a "patrician aristocracy of indigenous growth",[3] which would encompass both the Hindu and the Muslim aristocracy. Lytton even proposed to set up a Privy Council of Princes[4] in order to strengthen British rule in India and the Government preferred to nominate landlords to the Legislative Councils. Lyall, while recommending the nomination of Raja Amir Hassan to the Legislative Council of the North-Western Provinces, acknowledged that "The *Talukadars* are by far the most considerable body of landlords under my government, they ought always to be represented..."[5] Though the aristocrats had little claim to represent their communities truly, still the Hindu and Muslim aristocrats were nominated in such a way that they served as a counterpoise to each other.[6] The rich were very few, "but as a whole, a dead weight seems to hang on the Indian community, commented Syed Ameer Ali."[7] This was all the more true of the Muslims, for their aristocracy generally did not even have the necessary education to project the Muslim point of view in the Councils. Ameer Ali observed:

> "It is difficult to see what services such men could possibly render to the senate in its task of law-making".[8]

Sir Syed described the state of the Muslim upper class thus:

> "Look at the state of our rich. They have nothing to do except waste their lives in cock-fighting, quail-fighting, pigeon fancying and other such absurd pastimes."[9]

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 407.
2. H. J. S. Cotton, *New India*, p. 122.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Salisbury to Lytton, 9 June 1877; G. Cecil, *Life of Salisbury*, Vol. II, p. 68.
5. Lyall to Primrose, 29 February 1884, *Lyall Collection*, Mss. Eur., F. 132, Vol. 39, IOL Henceforth LYC.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Syed Ameer Ali, "Some Indian Suggestions", *The Nineteenth Century*....1880.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Maqalat*, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 49.

In comparison with the Hindu bourgeoisie, the Muslim aristocracy was found definitely wanting in initiative and public spirit:

> "There is less energy and restlessness amongst the higher Mahomedans than amongst Hindus of the same social rank."[1]

Despite their lassitude, they were not loth to assert their superiority over their poor brethren by claiming noble descent from Sayyid, Mughal or Afghan families of old.[2] Foreign descent was regarded as a badge of honour and Muslim society was split into "*Ashraf*" and 'Ajlaf'.[3] Land and wealth were synonymous with noble birth, while poverty and humble professions were equated with the lower classes. The Government accentuated class distinctions by acknowledging some people to be superior, and degrading craftsmen and agricultural labourers to a menial status.[4] In the Punjab, it was understandable why Hindus might be set apart from the agriculturist community, but splitting the Muslim society into agriculturist and non-agriculturist classes was nothing short of an invidious system of preference. Since, officially, the cultivator was a menial worker, he could not own land in the newly developing canal colonies. The Government also erected new class barriers by lauding some castes as belonging to martial race, and condemning others to inferiority as a non-martial people. The Muslims living between the Indus and Jhelum were said to provide the best soldiers of the British Indian Army.[5]

In 1870, when the *Khwastgar-i-Taleem* Committee invited opinions about the causes of Muslim backwardness in education, the question of social distinction did engage the attention of the Committee, though opinions were divided. Some writers argued that the nobility withheld their sons from schools where the scions of aristocracy had to mix with children of the lower classes. For this reason, some writers felt that it was inadvisable to educate the lower classes and pleaded for their exclusion from education, which, they alleged had been the practice under Muslim rule. Others suggested the establishment of separate schools for the sons of the rich and the poor. Yet, one of the writers argued that

1. "The Present Economical Condition of the Musalmans of Bengal," *AIG*, 27 November 1877, IOL.

2. Class distinction was deprecated by Iqbal: "So you are Sayyids and are Mirzas and are Afghans too. All of that you are; tell me though, are you Musalmans, too?" See "Jawab-i-Shikwa" in *Bang-i-Dara*, Lahore 1935, pp. 225-26.

3. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. I, pp. 328.

4. J. M. Wikeley, *Handbook for the Indian Army, Punjabi Musalmans*, Govt. of India publication, second ed., 1935. This book deals with the castes and classes of Punjabi Muslims. Regarding pride of Muslim Rajput tribes, see p. 3.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

discrimination between high and low classes should not be based on criteria of wealth or poverty.[1] Sir Syed felt that such an assumption of equality was unrealistic. Taking a pragmatic stand, he argued that since in daily life, the same respect was accorded to the new rich as to the old aristocrat, wealth and not birth should be the real criterion of distinction between classes.[2] Though social discrimination was not officially permitted within the M. A. O. College, this very controversy was symptomatic of the feudal outlook of the Muslim elite, which continued to pull its weight in the political calculations of Muslim leaders. In his Lucknow address of 28 December 1887, Sir Syed ridiculed the idea of a political system in which the sons of the lower classes could rise to rule the higher classes.[3] Possibly this argument was meant to pander to the class prejudice of the Muslim aristocracy against the Hindu bourgeoisie; but it did show that the upper-class Muslims, whether of family or wealth, did not like the idea of extending educational facilities to the Muslim masses—and were in that, at least fair equals of their feudal English counterparts! Sir Syed's disciple, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, was even ready to defend class privilege to the extent of depriving the poor of all access to education. Though himself not of aristocratic birth, he lamented the emerging situation in which low-caste persons like "grocers, inn-keepers, barbers, butchers, washermen, grass-cutters, tailors, *khansamas*, *khidmatgars* and even sweepers have plunged into education. Though education did not raise these menials in the social scale, they have degraded education."[4] Obviously, English education was fast developing into another barrier splitting the Muslim society; and by 1888, there began to emerge a coterie of English educated Muslims whose personal interests were not necessarily identical with the general interests of the Muslim people. Though the Muslim masses were quite unorganized, they were not entirely unaware of the ruthless manner in which the upper classes exploited their assumed superiority. They expressed the resultant resentment against the English educated by sneering at their dress and manners, and derided them as sycophants.[5] Ameer Ali and his friends were thus far from popular for their Western style;[6] and Sir Syed was ridiculed for his advocacy of Western education.

1. *Syed Mahmud's lecture on Muslim Education in the 9th Education Congress*, held on 30 December 1894, *Tract*, p. 22, IOL.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
3. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 317.
4. Muhammad Nazir Husain, ed., *Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, Lektcharon Ka Majmua*, p. 24.
5. *Maqalat*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XI, pp. 588-89.
6. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Although some educated persons like Khan Bahadur Maulvi Imdad Ali[1] and later Akbar Allahabadi joined this campaign of derision against Sir Syed their voices were essentially an echo of the have-nots protest against the privileges of the upper crust. To interpret this protest in terms of a genuine class-struggle would be unrealistic for the motivation of the poor was still based on traditional religious factors, in which the awareness of economic realities was active only as a subconscious element.

The absence of a substantive middle class placed the Muslims at a disadvantage against the Hindus, who were served by a very active middle class. Muslims had no real share in trade; were generally ignorant of commerce and industry, which had been monopolised by others;[2] and were deficient in those sources of wealth and influence which could have fostered the growth of a middle class. While the Hindu leader drew strength from trade and industry, the Muslim leader had no financially independent class at his back, and was dependent on Government favour. A Bengali Muslim lamented:

> "There was hardly a leading man among the Calcutta Mahomedans who had any means apart from his Government pay. Neither Amir Ali nor Abd-el-Latif could afford to come forward as a champion, as all their prospects depended on the Government."[3]

Sir Syed and his colleagues were in a similar position. The Muslim leaders' dependence on state employment often inhibited his initiative; and in times of crisis he was faced with a choice between independence and unemployment. The *Akhbar-ul-Islam*[4] commented that, under the circumstances, self-reliant leadership could only emerge if individuals were so stirred with religious zeal that they were moved to sacrifice their selfish aims. In face of prevalent weak religious sentiment, Muslims should strive to attain such a high degree of education and wealth that personal aims could be easily achieved, leaving them enough time and freedom to engage in national service. Since Muslim society did not fulfil either of these conditions, its leadership was inherently handicapped.[5] However, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali were exceptional persons who symbolized the religious zeal and spirit of sacrifice. Generally, the Hindu leader was more responsive to the economic demands of the Hindu bourgeoisie who supported

1. *Maqalat*, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, pp. 80-1.
2. "Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's Speech" *Tract No.* 538/87, p. 4., IOL.
3. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
4. *Akhbar-ul-Islam*, n.d., cited in *Akhbar-i-'Alam*, 3 May 1884, PUL.
5. *Ibid*

him.[1] On the other hand, the Muslim leader was under no such financial obligation or pressure from his community to seek redress for grievances; and if he did identify himself with its interests, and raised his voice against Muslim unemployment or the exploitation of Muslim tenants, this was the outcome of a roused personal conscience.[2] While Hindu politics developed into a bourgeoisie enterprise, Muslim politics largely remained a matter of personal leadership. The Muslim leader could combine financial freedom with politics only in independent professions like law; but even in such fields, he often found himself elbowed out.[3] Nevertheless this period saw the emergence of a Muslim leadership from the ranks of lawyers; and the pattern set by Ameer Ali and Badruddin Tyabji continued till the Quaid-i-Azam. At the same time, small bourgeoisie groups began to spring up in metropolitan towns like Calcutta, Bombay Madras, Lucknow, Delhi and Lahore, which then developed into focal points of political activity, and radiated their influence to the Muslim masses in less developed parts of the country.

Most Muslims were poor in urban as well as rural areas, although the shade of their penury varied from Bengal to the Punjab. Naturally they were dissatisfied.[4] Sir Syed's description of an Eid crowd, clad in old clothes and worn out shoes, followed by swarms of beggars, is a true vignette of Muslim urban indigence.[5] Like rest of the population, most of the Muslims also lived in villages, and eked out their existence on agriculture. The cultivator was oppressed by the Hindu money-lender in the Punjab and the Hindu landlord in Bengal. "The bulk of the peasantry in Eastern Bengal, numbering seven million souls" were Muslims.[6] They were subjected to exploitation by the landlords, who were mostly Hindus, and treated their tenants in a "despotic and oppressive manner."[7] In Bengal, while the Muslim peasant was impoverished, even the Muslim

1. Lytton wrote that "the British Indian Association of Bengal was comprised of Bengali *zemindars* who contribute less than any other portion of the community to the requirements of the State, against whose administration they are ever ready to re-echo all the radical rubbish talked in England. . ." Lytton to Cranbrook, 12 May 1879, *Letters Despatched, LTC*, IOL.

2. Ameer Ali, speaking on the Bengal Rent Bill, said that Muslim ryots had a natural claim on him to defend their cause. *Legislative Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General* (March 1885), p. 156, IOL.

3. Ameer Ali, "A Cry From the Indian Mahomedans", *op. cit.*, p. 206.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

5. Malik Fazal Din, ed., *Sir Syed, Mazamin-i-Tehzibul-Akhlaq*, pp. 537-43.

6. Ameer Ali, *Legislative Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General*, (*March* 1885), *op. cit.*, IOL.

7. K. K. Aziz, *Ameer Ali*, "The Life-Problem of Bengal", p. 81.

landowner was "more impecunious and thriftless than the Hindu".[1] Monetary transactions and banking were monopolised by the Hindus, and the Muslims stood "nowhere in comparison with them".[2] "In all large towns, eminent merchants and wholesale traders are seldom, if ever Musalmans."[3] Muslim poverty in other parts of India was almost a replica of the Muslim misery in Bengal. Though in the North-Western Provinces, the Muslim aristocracy had a fair share of lands, the poor Muslims there were little better off than the poor elsewhere. Muslim ryots of the Punjab were oppressed by the Banias, who grabbed their lands through laws that favoured them.[4] Muslim cultivators of Multan complained that they were being reduced to poverty, and that their lands were being usurped by money lenders.[5] Thus poverty was unredeemed: and those who laboured for their daily pittance had neither the money for education nor the time for political activity. There was little rapport between the Muslim landlord and the Muslim cultivator; and the tie of a common faith often weighed lightly with him in his relationship with the peasantry.

Though the Muslim masses lived in a state of ignorance and poverty, they were roused to action in the name of religion, and their fundamental faith in Islam continued to shape their social behaviour. So the poor Muslims did not lag behind their rich compatriots in making contributions for the M.A.O. College at Aligarh. During Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, the hearts of the Indian Muslims went out to their Turkish brethren, and by January 1878, they had collected and sent Rs. 570,000 for the Turkish Relief Fund.[6] Rich ladies of Lahore donated their gold and silver ornaments and the poor parted with their daily pittance for the relief of the wounded and the widows and orphans.[7] Poverty did not prevent the under-privileged Muslim to identify himself with the national causes. Indeed his sacrifice was greater for he did not hesitate to lay down his life for the cause of Islam. The awareness of a common destiny enlivened the Muslim mind; and in fact constituted a defence mechanism which buoyed them up amidst the disasters that engulfed them in the aftermath of 1857. Economic differences were sub-ordinated to the demands of the Muslim national existence; and it was this fraternal sentiment that led influential Muslim elements to line up on

1. *The Pioneer Mail*, 16 February 1878, IOL.

2. "The Present Economical Condition of the Musalmans of Bengal", *AIG*, 27 November 1877, IOL.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Punjabi Akhbar*, 8 January 1876, NWPNR. 1876, IOL.

5. *Danish-i-Hind*, Multan, 13 April 1887, NWPNR. 1887, IOL.

6. *Ahsan-ul-Akhbar*, n.d., cited by Abdul Salam Khurshid in *Sahafat, Pakistan-o-Hind Mein*, Lahore, 1963, p. 275.

7. *Akhbar Anjuman-i-Punjab*, Supplement, 1 June 1877, PUL.

the side of the underprivileged Muslims when they were embroiled in affrays with Hindus. Muslim lawyers defended those who had been involved in Hindu-Muslim riots; journalists like Muharram Ali Chishti boldly projected Muslim views on the riots.[1] Ameer Ali took up the matter of the Salem riot victims with the Government[2] and pointed out:

> "Salem has been, for some time past, one of the chief centres of Hindu fanaticism; and there can be little doubt that the Mahomedans, who are in a minority there, were subjected to gross outrages."

There was thus an undercurrent of national unity despite iniquitous socio-economic disparities:

> "Indian Mahomedans united..have an intellectual force and a consistency of purpose and a consolidation of power that cannot be attributed to the Turk, or to the Arab split into a thousand sects and a hundred principalities. The educated Mahomedans of India have fifth of the population at their back, a sluggish mass indeed, but none can know the enthusiasm may move them, when the man and hour come."[3]

By 1876 the time had come, and the leaders were on the scene: The Muslim nation had begun to stir. They had turned a corner in their political history, and had come to realize "that the ancient paths were unprofitable to stand upon."[4] But while the change was perceptible[5] who could then have foreseen how the establishment of M. A. O. College at Aligarh, and the organization of the Central National Mahomedan Association, would later shape the course of Muslim political activity? The pattern of Muslim political activity that emerged during the last quarter of the 19th century was so different from what it later became in the 20th century that it now seems to have belonged to a different people. It is indeed hard to believe that the agitational politics of the 20th century could have grown out of the loyal policies of the 19th century. But this apparent difference is really little more than that between a seedling and a

1. See *Rafiq-i-Hind* of 18 August 1888, for the political aspects of the cow slaughter question, and *Rafiq-i-Hind* of July 6, 1889 for the legal implications of cow slaughter. See also its issue of 21 September 1889 for an account of the Hindu-Muslim riot in Ruhtak.

2. Ameer Ali to Primrose, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, 5 April 1884. *Correspondence in India*, RC., 1884, Vol. I, BM.

3. Alfred Haggar, *England and Islam*, Calcutta, 1876, *Tract* 526, p. 15.

4. *Resolution of the Government of India on Muslim Education*, 13 June 1873. See C. H. Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858-1947, Select Documents*, pp. 180-83.

5. Speech of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *AIG*, 28 May 1875.

tree. The revolutionary politics of Muhammad Ali Jauhar[1] would not have been possible without the prior success of the loyal politics of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.[2] The spectrum of Muslim politics embraced matters ranging from the promotion of English education to the protection of Muslim rights, from the representation of Muslim demands to the reinterpretation of Islam. Since politics pervaded nearly all aspects of religious, economic, social and cultural life, Muslim leadership had to be an exercise in versatility in which Sir Syed and Ameer Ali excelled.

Political activity in those days could take place only on the sufferance of the British rulers, and the Government for its own reasons, encouraged the formation of certain associations by the Indians. The first Muslim Association, established in 1855, was acclaimed by an English newspaper of Calcutta which observed that the Government was not troubled by the formation of yet another association in "an age of Associations".[3] The establishment of a Muslim Association was well-justified in view of the fundamental Hindu-Muslim differences. The paper pointed out:

> "The Hindoos and Mahomedans may be said to constitute two different nations in India, between whom there is no affinity of interests, and not the smallest sympathy of feeling".[4]

The Muslims had came to realize that, while the Indian Planters Association looked after the interests of European planters, and the British Indian Association watched over "the interests of Hindoos generally",[5] Muslims had no such organization to promote their interests:

> "The Mahomedans have at length become aware of the importance of their interests as a body, and they have now determined for the first time...to form an association like their neighbours around them, with its headquarters in the metropolis."[6]

The first meeting of the Anjuman-i-Islam[7] or the Mahomedan Association, was held at the residence of Maulvi Muhammad Mazhar, a son of the Qazi of Sadar Diwani Adalat, on 6 May 1855.[8] It was presided over by

1. He warned the British Government that Muslim loyalty was conditional on the consideration shown to their religious responsibilities, See Raees Ahmad Jaffari, *Afadat-i-Muhammad Ali Marhoom* Hyderabad, Deccan 1945, p. 63.

2. John Strachey, *India*, London 1888, p. 176.

3. *The Friend of India*, 7 May 1855, pp 308-309. IOL.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 308.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 308-309.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, p. 312.

Abdul Bari, the Qazi of Calcutta, and was addressed by Muhammad Abdur Rauf, the editor of *Doorbeen*, who dwelt "on the advantages of uniting in a body."[1] The meeting passed a number of resolutions, of which the first affirmed that the Association had been organised "for the purpose of promoting the general welfare of the Mahomedan Community of India".[2] Resolution No. 6 proposed to circulate the proceedings "to all influential members of the Mahomedan Community throughout India."[3] However, Resolution No. 9 stimulated that "no measures should on any occasion be taken that might in any manner, appear inimical to the British Government."[4] In accordance with this, when the Association later expressed its deep concern over the events of 1857, it passed a resolution, on 27 May 1857, which conveyed its members confidence in the British Government and stated that they felt certain that the fire of this rebellion will soon be extinguished."[5] The association disputed the accusation that the Government had been interfering "with the religion or religious observance of any of their subjects."[6] The Committee of the Mahomedan Association placed its resolution before the Governor General, and assured him of the co-operation of the natives of this country.[7] Promising to give "every possible publicity"[8] to its resolution among the Muslims, the Association met again on 14 November 1858, and gave expression to their feelings of gratitude to the Queen for her proclamation, which gave an assurance of religious freedom to the peoples of India.[9] The Association expounded the policy of loyalism as an instrument of Muslim progress, which was subsequently developed into an active principle by Maulvi Abdul Latif, who was a member of its special committee.[10] Sir Syed also followed the precedent of the Mahomedan Association and did not originated the policy of loyalism or the idea of Muslim separatism which have become associated with his name.

After 1858, Muslim political activity remained suspended for many years; and it was not until Mayo that the Government relaxed its suspicions

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. J. K. Majumdar, *Indian Speeches and Documents of British Rule, 1827-1918*, Calcutta 1937, p. 64.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Fuzlur Rehman, President, Mahomedan Association of Calcutta, to the Governor General of India, 28 May 1857, *Ibid.*, p. 66.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.
10. *The Friend of India*, 17 May, 1885.

about Muslims, and began to encourage the growth of loyalist political activity among them. Ripon enlarged areas in which Indians could be associated with administration; and the growth of local self-government[1] created a political system conducive to the development of leadership at both district and national level. Ripon discounted the belief, held by some officials, that the Indians were indifferent to local self-government, and "prefer to have such affairs managed for them by Government officers."[2] The Governor General in Council himself did not agree with this view:

> "But as education advances, there is rapidly growing up all over the country an intelligent class of public spirited men, whom it is not only bad policy, but sheer waste of power to fail to utilize."[3]

The Muslims had their share of public spirited men who emerged as local leaders; and laid foundation of the Muslim leadership of the future.

Muslim politics was loyal in outlook and legal in its method: petitions not protests, and appeals not agitation were its instruments.[4] If their petitions and remonstrances failed, they had neither the strength of organization nor the force of public opinion to move the Government to accept their demands through public agitation. The Muslim press was too feeble and too dependent on Government favour to raise its voice in protest against Government policies.[5] Occasional notes of dissent by the Muslim press did not upset the Government. Thus the Muslim politics was bereft of any forceful and independent action. Except for Ameer Ali, Muslim leaders did not realize the importance of propaganda, and its effect on British public opinion, otherwise, according to Blunt "they would not be neglected and ill-treated by the Government as they now were."[6] Though Sir Syed was a protagonist of self-help, his purview excluded political activity.[7] As a result, Muslims began to go down in the esteem of Government, which had learnt to show deference to the strength of Hindu political organizations, rather than to Muslim professions of loyalty unbacked by political strength.[8] The Government took

1. Resolution of the Government of India, dated 18 May 1882, No. 17, *Parliamentary Papers, 1883*, Vol. II, IOL.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. LI, IOL.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Abdus Salam Khurshid, *Sahafat, Pakistan wa Hind Mein*, p. 178.
5. *Ibid.*
6. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104.
7. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 422. See also Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *Musalmanon ka Raushan Mustaqbil*, p. 321.
8. Ameer Ali, *MSA*, p. 59.

the Muslims for granted and they again lagged behind while the Hindus were forging ahead and successfully adapting the English methods of political organization and propaganda to their own advantage.

While a host of Muslim associations sprung up all over the Subcontinent, most of these were confined within district boundaries and mainly devoted to local interests. Besides, some of the associations were established by opportunistic individuals to advance their own selfish interests.[1] In most cases, the members of such societies and associations were illiterate yes-men or self-styled leaders.[2] Sir Syed deplored that "all the Indian Associations are lifeless."[3] Often they were just paper organizations, and in some cases, nothing more than handmaidens of European officers.[4] He regretted that "we do not possess the strength and determination to run our own affairs."[5] Yet Sir Syed himself resisted the efforts of Kempson, the Director of Public Instruction to gain control over the Scientific Society and the M. A. O. College,[6] and bequeathed a testament to his people:

> "Whatever may befall the Madrassa-tul-Uloom after me, never let slip its control from the hands of your own nation to other people."[7]

There was no real nation-wide Muslim political organization or leadership during this period. Of all the leaders, Sir Syed was most eminent, and influential; but even he confined his activities to Upper India. Bengal remained entirely outside the orbit of his influence.[8] Actually most of the genuinely active Muslim organizations were non-political in character, concentrating their efforts either on provincial affairs or on educational uplift. Of all the Muslim organizations, the Central National Mahomedan Association came nearest to being a nation-wide political organization.[9] Despite their elaborate paper constitution other associations had neither an adequate party machinery nor any political programme. In short Muslim organizations had no candidates to put up, no elections to fight, and no political power to share.

Muslim political consciousness had to find expression within the constraints of an autocratic British administration and the limitations of the

1. *Akhbar-i-Aam*, 6 January 1883, PUL.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Syed Ahmad to Maulvi Sayyid Mumtaz Ali, 18 August 1881 in Mushtaq Hussain, (Ed.), *Makatib-i-Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, Vol. I and II, Lahore nd, pp. 406-407.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *The Muslim Chronicle*, 29 December 1899, IOL.
9. See *The Central National Mahomedan Association*, Tract, p. i, IOL.

constitutional framework of British India. However in this Hindus and Muslims were "affected by the same political circumstances."[1] The Indian administration was autocratic in concept and practice.[2] Democracy and nationalism, that dominated the European political scene were inapplicable to the contemporary Indian political life. With military power forming the basis of British rule in India,[3] the people of India lived in a state of complete political subjection. Despite the Queen's proclaimed pledge to place the Indians on a footing of "equality with the subjects of the British Crown",[4] the Indian people still continued to be excluded from the higher echelons of the public service[5] of their own country. They therefore naturally complained that the administration had reduced the Queen's pledge to a dead letter. *Rahbar-i-Hind*, commenting on Lytton's speech at the Delhi Durbar observed:

> "The proclamation of 1858 as understood by the natives is a promise that they are to partake in the administration of their own country and have a voice in political matters, and this has apparently yet to be accomplished."[6]

The British Government neither encouraged nor entertained any illusions of democratic rule in India. Regarding the application of the electoral principle to the provincial councils, Lord Dufferin's Committee stated that, under existing circumstances, "popular election, in the English sense of the term, is...altogether impracticable."[7] Sir John Gorst, while advising Lansdowne to be ready for "gradual development in India," warned against, "the crude application of British democratic maxims to India".[8] Pronouncements of men like John Bright were idealistic

1. See *Friend of India*, 17 May 1855, IOL.
2. Sir Charles Wood, in his letter to Frere, 18 August 1861, described the Government of India as autocratic. See C. H. Philips, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41. Nineteen years later, Caird remarked, "We have introduced a system the first object of which, for a foreign Government, is necessarily the subjection of the people. See James Caird, "Condition of India," *Parliamentary Papers, 1880, (C. 2737)*, Vol. 53, p. 131, BM.
3. Though Lytton and his Council took exception to the Caird Report, they still had to admit that "The English power in India rests, and always must rest, in the last resort on the British troops..." See *LYC., File 52, Mss. Eur. F. 132*, IOL.
4. Queen Victoria to Derby, 15 August 1958. See C. H. Philips, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
5. "Natives are now practically excluded from the home competitions altogether." "Ripon's Minute of 26 September 1883," *Parliamentary Papers, 1885, (C-4580)*, Vol. 58, SHL.
6. *Rahbar-i-Hind*, 23 January 1877, *NWPNNR*, 1877, IOL.
7. See *Public Letters from India*, Vol. 9, (1888), pp. 1173-83, IOL.
8. Lord Newton, *Life of Lord Lansdowne*, London 1929, pp. 60-61.

exceptions,[1] which did not reflect the general thinking in the India Office. Even a liberal like Gladstone failed to translate his Midlothian election pledge into practical reform for India. His views about Indian reforms "had been proclaimed from house tops"; but he not only stalled reform, he also transferred the cost of the Egyptian war to the Indian Exchequer, despite the protests of Ripon.[2] Indeed, the British Government had already emphasized its imperial role in India by adding the title of 'Empress of India' to the other titles of the Queen. Lytton declared that the Royal Durbar "will be the means of drawing still closer the bonds of union between" the Crown and the feudatory princes.[3] Imperial interests thus remained paramount with the men who ruled India; their party affiliations did not matter, and the Indian people constituted a subsidiary factor in their political calculations. Temple, speaking on the reform of the Legislative Councils, advocated the "preponderance of the European voice", and admitted "that British Empire does not exist only for the benefit of human race, but also for the benefit and advancement of British industry, British trade, and British transactions of every kind."[4]

Nationalism, in the sense, that the various Indian nationalities aspired to have their own independent state, was not relevant to the context of 1876. Independence and self-rule had not yet entered the political dictionary of either the Hindus or the Muslims. They vied with each other in their professions of loyalty to the Crown. Sir Syed convened a public meeting to thank the Queen for her proclamation of 1858, and prayed to God for the perpetuation of the just rule of the British.[5] Kristo Das Pal in a speech, said, "India is the glory of England, and England the strength of India."[6] No doubt the British did bring different nationalities together into a common administrative system; but the political unity so achieved, did not imply a genuine national unity. The different Indian peoples, divergent in race, colour and caste, distinct in religion, language, and culture still remained divided. It is significant that even the best friends of India did not consider Indians to be one nation. John Bright warned the Parliament about the existence of

1. John Bright, speaking at Manchester on 11 December 1877, advocated the liberalisation of British Policy towards India. *British India: Speeches of the Rt. Hon. John Bright and Sir Arthur Cotton. Tract No. 504*, pp. 21-22, IOL.

2. See W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp., 3-4.

3. *AIG*, 29 December 1876, IOL.

4. *Temple Collection, Mss. Eur. F. 86/277*, pp. 8-9, IOL.

5. Hali, *op. cit*., pp. 139-52.

6. J. K. Mujamdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-7.

"twenty nations speaking twenty languages."[1] Forces dividing the Hindus and Muslims, were stronger than those that united them. The British policies also generated new strains and pressures which further disrupted the quantum of Hindu-Muslim amity and cooperation. English historians such as Elliot, tried to vitiate Hindu suffering under Muslim rule.[2] Many Hindus began to look upon the British as their liberators from Muslim tyranny. Keshub Chunder Sen, in his speech on 2 February 1870, said, "Mahomedan oppression and misrule at last completed the scene of moral and intellectual desolation, already so horrid."[3] The British were compared to instruments of Divine Providence intervening to rescue the Hindus.

However, English administration and education did foster a common outlook in certain spheres of Indian activity by serving to unite the varying forces among the Indian population and enlarging the areas of communal cooperation.[4] Some educated Indians, both Hindu and Muslim, drew inspiration from the writings of European political thinkers, and sought to apply their ideas to India. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, in a speech on 15 December 1829, said that there would be great "improvement in literary, social and political affairs" as a result of contact with the Europeans.[5] Several years later, Sir Syed, after his return from England, urged Muslims to accept European learning as the means of national progress.[6] Hindus and Muslims cooperated on issues like the Ilbert Bill. But this unifying effect of British administration was offset by the emergence of parallel reform movements among the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindu mind was being stirred by a movement which aimed at a reversion to their pristine religious thought and Aryan cultural patterns and looked upon the Vedas as *Svath Pramana* or the Primary Authority.[7] The Muslims were no less emphatic about their cultural identity.[8] These movements were mutually exclusive. Sanctity for the cow could not be reconciled

1. Thorold E. James Rogers, *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by John Bright, M. P.*, Vol. L, p. 49.
2. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-71.
3. J. K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-90.
4. Cotton, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
5. Majumdar, *op. cit.*
6. Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 192.
7. Ganga Parshad Upadhaya, *The Origin, Scope and Mission of the Arya Samaj*, Allahabad 1940, p. 35. Lajpat Rai described the Vedas as "the primeval revelation." *The Arya Samaj*, Lahore 1932, p. 87.
8. Hali wrote his *Musaddas* in 1879, in which he lamented the decay of Muslim power, and urged the Muslims to strive for the revival of their past glory. Ibadat Brelvi, *Jadeed Sha'iri*, Karachi 1961, p. 117 and p. 136.

with cow-slaughter. The anti-cow-slaughter movement often burst out into anti-Muslim riots; and as a result of these outbursts of fanaticism,[1] the traditional Hindu-Muslim social accord began to erode away. The Urdu-Hindi controversy further enlarged the areas of Hindu-Muslim confrontation. As the feeling of separateness began to grow upon the Hindu and the Muslim consciousness, their differences developed not only into a political conflict but also into a veritable *Kulturkampf*. The Muslims were fifty years behind the Hindus in education,[2] economic activity and political organization. This disparity in their respective levels of development made any fusion into nationhood all the more difficult, since the two of them thus came to be ranged against each other, more or less, as exploiters and exploited.

1. "It is indisputable that the recent outburst of fanaticism in Azamgarh is immediately due to the influence of the cow-protection societies..." Extract from a letter from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, No. 47, dated 20 September 1893. Enclosure No. 2. "Religious Disturbance: Report relating to recent conflict between Hindus and Mahomedans in India, and particularly to the causes which led to them." *Parliamentary Papers, No. 538, 1893-94*, Vol. 58, S.U.L.

2. "The fact that Hindus had gone far ahead in education and service was disliked..." Jawahar Lal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, 1946 ed., 408.

CHAPTER II

SIR SYED'S POLITICS : 1876-1892

The career of Sir Syed Ahmad, more than that of any other Muslim leader, epitomizes the transformation of Muslim society from Indian to Muslim nationalism. His career not only unfolds the change in Syed Ahmad's personal outlook, but also encompasses the emergence of new trends in Muslim political thinking after 1876. The history of Muslim regeneration is so interwoven with the texture of his career that one can appreciate it only within the framework of his political ideas and activities, which dominated the political scene till the end of 19th century.[1] Sir Syed had been engaged in political activity even during his official career, and had won acclaim for his "enlightened and disinterested labours which he had undertaken for the benefit of his countrymen".[2] He resigned in July 1876 in order to devote more time to the affairs of the M. A. O. College.[3] His contemporaries were aware of the magnitude of his achievement; even as an official, and in a farewell address, both Hindus and Muslims of Benares praised him for his "unparalleled zeal....for the advancement, gain and welfare of India's sons and daughters...".[4] The Anjuman-i-Punjab lauded Sir Syed's resolve to "devote his future life to the welfare and betterment of the Indian Muslims...". The Indian Muslims are so much beholden to him that they styled him *Fakhr-i-Ahle-Islam-i-Hind*,[5] i.e. Pride of the Indian Followers of Islam. His resignation in July 1876, came as a climax to his struggle for the establishment of the M. A. O. College, which had occupied his attention since 1870. No doubt the M. A. O. College itself was a monument to his genius. Yet it was also unique in the sense that it owed "its establishment, not to the charity and love of learning of an individual, not to the patronage of a monarch, but to the combined and the united efforts of a whole community....It is based upon principles of toleration and progress, such as find no parallel in the

1. Hafeez Malik, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
2. Strachey's remarks on Sir Syed's resignation in *AIG*, 4 August 1876.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *AIG*, 4 August 1876, *op. cit.* See also Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
5. *AIG*, 15 September 1876.

annals of the East."[1] Not merely another college, it symbolized Muslim renaissance after a protracted period of intellectual torpor. Sir Syed maintained that the Muslims could not progress without sound religious education combined with the arts and sciences of the West.[2] Emphasizing religious education Sir Syed exhorted the students, "There is no god but Allah, this is the cornerstone of our faith, and only by believing in it we are a nation. If you excel in other fields but do not believe in it, then we shall cease to be a nation. We would have nothing to do with you, even if you shine like stars in the firmament...".[3] He applied English education as a socio-political catalyst, and by synthesizing Western knowledge with traditional Islamic modes he created a new model of progress which stimulated national life on a large scale. Despite opposition from some Muslim quarters Sir Syed's educational experiment gained wide currency among the Muslims of the Subcontinent. As the shared concern and united efforts of Sunnis and Shias had gone into the establishment of the M. A. O. College,[4] it epitomized a new sense of purpose and national cohesion among various religious groups and sects who were stirred by common aspirations of Muslim revival. The M. A. O. College helped in promoting understanding and sympathy between the Muslim youth and the Government, and in this manner Sir Syed created an atmosphere of credibility in which he built up his politics. Undoubtedly, Sir Syed's political career squarely rested on his monumental educational achievement.

Sir Syed had formulated his political views through the years, and it would be arbitrary to split these views into distinct compartment corresponding to the periods before and after 1876. Although Sir Syed was no political theorist, he had a clear understanding of the *Political Economy* of John Stuart Mill[5] and appreciated the spirit and working of British democracy. If at all he has a claim to be a political thinker, it is only as a pioneer who stood for the application even on a limited scale of British constitutional principles to India.[6] He advocated these ideas at a time,

1. Syed Mahmud's address of welcome to Lord Lytton, *Ibid., Supplement*, 12 January 1877, IOL.

2. I. T. Pritchard, *Social Progress in India*, 8 June 1871, London, IOL.

3. *AIG*, 1 September 1876.

4. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1875.

5. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 909. He had it translated under the auspices of the Scientific Society. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

6. Sir Syed asked whether the time had not come..."when the interests of this great dependency are" to be represented in the governing body of the British nation. Sir Syed's speech before the British Indian Association, 1866, Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

when educated Indians dared not even mention such ideas, since they were least compatible with English policy and temper[1] in India, and in England too, appealed to only a few radicals like John Bright. But it was in practical politics that he left an imprint as a leader of vision and realism. It was a personal accomplishment; for he hailed from a society which had been out of touch with politics for the last one century.[2] Having neither any English education nor any political training, except that which came his way during his administrative career,[3] he was basically self-taught. This factor lent an air of empiricism to his politics; but in reality, his political outlook was based on principles he had discovered as truths writ in his experience. It appears that these principles had crystallized by 1869, and continued to condition his later political views and, activity. However, some of his principles did not stand up to the test of time and had to be modified or readjusted in the light of changing circumstances. On the other hand, there were certain political questions on which he was not prepared to alter his views; and for this, while some of his contemporaries praised him as steadfast, others criticized for being utterly one-sided. Until 1876, his political thought and activity would reveal the following configuration of his principles:

(1) As in Islam, religion and politics are inseparable, he always sought guidance in his faith, which he interpreted in modern rational terms.[4] Islam was the source of his inspiration, and Muslims ever remained the focus of his political activity. Though the application of Islamic ideas and principles was not always feasible in the political set-up of a non-Muslim government, he never wavered in his faith and never faltered in the service of Muslims.

> "We think, as his life history bears testimony, as is evident from his circumstances; and as is clear from his word and deed, the mainspring of all his achievements, the motive force in all his noble aims, and his guide in every quest was nothing but his religion."[5]

His upbringing and education had given him a deep insight into Islam,[6]

1. Beadon, the Foreign Secretary, Government of India, wanted to prosecute Sir Syed for his seditious thoughts in his *Asbab*. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-48.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 671.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

4. Syed Ahmad Khan, *Al-Tahrir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, trans. by M. D. Rahbar, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Principles of Exegesis", *Muslim World*, Hartford, 1956, XLVI, p.105. See also Bashir Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, Lahore 1957, pp. 261-62, 270-271.

5. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 676.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 365.

which was sharpened by his experience and scholarship.[1] When the tragedy befell the Muslims in 1857, it was his faith which sustained him in that dark hour.[2] For him, "the disgrace of the Muslims was the disgrace of Islam"[3] and this caused him deep anguish. He found solace in the example of the Holy Prophet; and dedicated himself to the task of reviving the strength of the followers of Islam. How best could he serve the Muslim cause? He found an answer in the thought that "Muslims could only be raised through their faith, and their faith could be reinforced through worldly progress."[4] He dispelled the misconception, propagated by the Europeans, that the Muslims' decay was due to their religion, and proved that "Islam properly understood is the friend of progress."[5] But after 1857 three obstacles did block the path of Muslim progress: (*i*) Christian missionaries were at work trying to undermine the Muslim faith in Islam, which was also an object of fear and suspicion in Government circles. (*ii*) Government hostility towards Muslims threatened their existence as a political entity. (*iii*) And, while Muslims could ignore Western learning and modern science only at the cost of further decline,[6] the orientation of English education threatened to subvert the religious and cultural values of Muslim society. The problem thus was how to harness the new learning and science to become a source of Muslim progress. Facing this threefold challenge, Sir Syed charted a course for Muslim advancement through a series of sagacious compromises. In this context, his politics was a means of preserving the Muslim identity against hostile forces, and creating a breathing space in which they could recuperate and build up their strength. Muslims always came first in his political calculations.

(2) Thus, for him, loyalty to the British Crown became a means of peace and progress for all the peoples of India. In historical perspective, his loyalism unfolded itself both as a religious necessity,[7] and a political creed. His "conspicuous loyalty"[8] during the revolt earned official recognition; but he refused to accept any reward for it,[9] since for him, the services rendered were a matter of duty. After 1858, his loyalist senti-

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. 366.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Sir John Strachey, *India*, London 1888, p. 177.
6. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 489-90.
7. He did not regard the uprising of 1857 as a *Jihad*. See the *Maqalat*, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, pp. 57-59. See also Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
8. Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 108-11.
9. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 138-9.

ments matured into a credo, and gradually became a bridge between the Muslims and Government. He organized a public meeting on 28 July 1859, and, on behalf of his co-religionists expressed their gratitude to the Queen, who had promulgated a decree of mercy for her 'erring subjects'. He also thanked Providence for having put them under the protection of just rulers.[1] This speech was more of an expression of mass penitence on behalf of Muslims rather than an exposition of loyalism as a doctrine. Later, he wrote a comparative study of the Quran and the Bible with the aim of persuading the Christian rulers that there was an affinity between the two religions, and that Muslims could therefore be their true friends. He stressed that it was obligatory for Muslims to help the People of the Book, and added that:

> "If such ideas become prevalent, and it seems they are spreading among Indian Muslims, then they would not only be faithful, but the antagonism which arose (between Muslims and Christians) after the spread of Islam would also be removed."[2]

His juristic interpretation of Christian-Muslim friendship was also designed to render the British raj more acceptable to the Muslims, whose political opinions were conditioned by their religious outlook. He urged Muslims to establish social contact with Christians as People of the Book, in order to remove the barriers that stood in the way of their mutual understanding.[3] Later, he elaborated loyalism as an obligation for Muslims living in a *Dar-ul-Islam*, and disputed Hunter's allegations of disloyalty, and reinforced his arguments with an array of fatwas.[4]

However, basically, he expounded loyalism for political reasons since his realism had taught him the lesson of loyalty, and he saw it as a necessary phase of historical process. In 1857, he had foreseen that the inadequately organized insurgents, undermined by treason, were bound to fail against the superior arms and resources of the British. He even urged the insurgents to come to terms with the British before it was too late.[5] And, if the British triumph over India was inevitable, then it must be accepted with good grace. It was for this reason that he did not lament the disappearance of the titular Mughal rule which had lost all relevance to political reality after 1801, and even contended that the British raj had come as a boon after the "long period of what was but mitigated

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-52.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
3. See his *Risala-i-Ahkam-i-Ahl-i-Kitab*, 1866. See also Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
4. Syed Ahmad Khan, *Review*, *Appendices I and II*.
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

slavery"[1] under Hindu Rajas and Mughal Emperors. He added that the people had no rights under the despotic rule of their compatriots, who ruled over them neither in accordance with Islam nor in conformity with Hinduism.[2] In 1876, he again deplored the autocratic nature of pre-British governments, in which the Mughal Emperor exercised absolute power over the life and property of his subjects and could act against the law.[3] Pointing out that the people then had no means of constitutional redress in case of oppression, he asserted that

> "... now Indians are no longer the subjects of a despotic government; they are the subjects of a government which is bound by laws, and under its aegis their wishes and needs are presented before the public, and are attended to."[4]

The necessity of Muslim loyalty figured more prominently in the over-all context of Indian loyalty, as he felt that the Muslims had a greater need to identify themselves with the British than other communities had. The armed struggle of 1857 had left them a legacy of misery and frustration, and subjected them to the suspicion and antipathy of the Government.[5] He took upon himself the task of effecting a reconciliation between the angry British rulers and the aggrieved Muslim subjects.[6] The loss of power was a traumatic experience for Muslims which they could not easily forget. If the antagonism had been the result of a single incident, in an otherwise smooth relationship between ruler and ruled, a rapprochement might not have been so difficult.[7] But due as it was to religious hostility exacerbated by political struggle for the mastery of Hindustan,[8] any effort at reconciliation involved more than mere overtures to convince the British of Muslim *bonafides*; it entailed a complete reorientation of attitudes on both sides. Sir Syed therefore did not only address himself to the Muslims, but to the Government as well. He did not prescribe subservience but advocated cooperation with the Government for the sake of Muslim uplift.[9] He

1. Sir Syed's speech before the British Indian Association, 1867, cited by J. M. S. Baljon in the *Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, Leiden 1949, p. 4.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *AIG*, 5 May 1876.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 392. See also A. C. Lyall, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
7. Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 355.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
9. Mohsin-ul-Mulk's speech of 22 October 1873 in *Majmua Lectures wa Speeches of Mohsin-ul-Mulk*, Lahore, nd, Vol. I, p. 29.

emphasized education as a precondition for securing their due share of state patronage, as a means for catch up with other more advanced communities. On the other hand he urged the Government to allay Muslim fears of official hostility, and thereby create a climate of confidence[1] that was as essential for the stability of British rule as it was for Muslim progress. In this manner, loyalty and Muslim welfare became two synonymous phrases in the political vocabulary of Sir Syed. His loyalism was not limited to an identification with the British Government of India, but extended to Muslim support for British imperial interests all over the world. Such application of loyalism became extremely controversial, as it could not be reconciled with allegiance to the Sultan of Turkey,[2] the recognized caliph of Sunni Muslims, and with sympathy for other Muslim nations coming into conflict with British imperial designs. Indeed, quite apart from this external aspect, Sir Syed's credo of loyalism had other more immediate negative aspects as well. As the years passed, he began to oppose all forms of political activity among Muslims,[3] which he feared might compromise their loyalty in face of the rising current of Hindu nationalism. Though by 1876, the Government had awakened to the gravity of the Muslims grievances, it was under no obligation to redress these in accordance with their wishes, and could of course ignore their interests if it suited its imperial policy. Muslims had no means of asserting their rights; and ultimately loyalism proved to be a one-sided affair. But we are anticipating.

(3) Sir Syed had at one time also been a champion of Hindu-Muslim unity in all spheres of Indian life. This sentiment found expression in three ways:

(*a*) in personal relationships; (*b*) in cultural contacts; and
(*c*) in political affairs.

(*a*) He was a product of that social environment of Delhi in which Hindus and Muslims had learnt to live as neighbours and friends.[4] Religious differences were respected rather than disputed. He was thus imbued with a sense of tolerance and courtesy in his personal relations with Hindus, which ranged from warm friendship with Raja Jai Kishen Das to cordiality with his employee Sham Bihari Lal, who betrayed his trust and defrauded the M. A. O. College.[5] His relationships were free of all taint of prejudice; and his friends were convinced of his kindness in his

1. Sir Syed Ahmad, *Review*, reprinted in *Maqalat*, Vol. IX, p. 206.
2. Sir Syed Ahmad, *Akhari Mazamin*, Lahore 1898, p. 69.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
4. *Khutbat-i-Garcin de Tassy*, Aurangabad 1935, pp. 48-49.
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-37.

dealings with indigent Hindus.[1] Although, in later years, many Hindus developed an antagonism against him because of his opposition to the Indian National Congress he continued to have the same old cordial relations with his Hindu friends. For him, Hindu-Muslim amity was a living experience, which he wanted the new generation to share and cherish.

(*b*) He stood for fraternal relations between Hindus and Muslims, as children of the same land, and felt that India could make no progress if the two communities did not maintain and strengthen their cultural bonds. They had to learn to live as one people.[2] In the *Asbab*, he raised his voice against the Christian missionaries preaching against Hindu religious beliefs[3] and deprecated the fact that certain jails had no arrangements to observe the dietary taboos of different Hindu castes.[4] He secured Hindu collaboration for establishing the Scientific Society which aimed at translating European books on the arts and sciences "into such language as may be in common use among the people,"[5] and decided not to touch any works on religion.[6] By a consensus the Society continued to translate books only into Urdu. In August 1867, Sir Syed submitted a petition, on behalf of the British Indian Association of the North-western provinces, to the Governor General,[7] requesting the Government to establish an Urdu university. In this connection, among other things, he pointed out that in the dissemination of education, the Government should aim at fostering noble principles and high thoughts, and should exercise care that such principles and ideas were not wedded to any particular religious dogmas, and were not based on sectarian or national customs.[8] It is thus obvious that he had non-sectarian aims, and was supported by many eminent Hindus in sponsoring this scheme. But a few months later, some Hindu gentlemen of Benares organized a society to petition in favour of Hindi in the Devnagri script, instead of Urdu, which was favoured by Sir Syed, the British Indian Association, and the Scientific Society. It

1. In the beginning, Raja Jai Kishen Das thought Sir Syed to be a bigoted Muslim; but when he saw the selfless service redered by him to the famine stricken people irrespective of any discriminatory regard for their religion, the Raja was convinced of his humanity. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-2.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 899.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 902.

5. "Bye-Laws of the Scientific Society", Yusuf Hussain, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Petition of the British Indian Association, Aligarh, 1 August 1867, *Home-Education Proceedings, No. 19*, September 1867, IOL.

8. *Maqalat, op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 54-5.

is interesting to note that, while the pro-Hindi society could not claim the allegiance of a single Muslim, Sir Syed's scheme for an Urdu university enjoyed the backing of men like Raja Jai Kishen Das, who, propagated the ideal of the Society "that European sciences and arts should be widely diffused among natives of India through the medium of Urdu language. . ."[1] But despite the support given to Urdu by a section of Hindus, the opposition to Urdu began to grow in volume and intensity. Sir Syed was shocked.[2] He held Urdu to be a common legacy of Hindus and Muslims, which was a bridge rather than a barrier between the communities. In disowning Urdu, the Hindus rejected their cultural rapport with the Muslims. In this respect, the Hindus were the first to display separatist tendencies, thus, in 1867, opening the first front of what became a continuing Hindu-Muslim conflict. From its inception, this conflict was basically cultural, and hence more fundamental, and more politically dangerous, than the usual differences on communal issues.

Sir Syed was disillusioned, and he decided that henceforth he had better stand for the rights of Muslims only.[3] This was the beginning of a major change in his outlook; but it is difficult to agree with Sherwani's contention that the change in his views was "sudden and complete."[4] He did in fact continue to explore new avenues to promote Hindu-Muslim cultural cooperation. Thus for instance, in 1877, he formulated a plan for orphanges for the welfare of Hindu Muslim orphans. He said:

> "With all humility and with all patriotic fervour, I appeal to both Muslims and Hindus, in the name of God and in the name of Ram Ji, that they should have mercy on the orphan and foundling children of their nation, and join hands with me in those plans which I have thought of since long for their upbringing and care."[5]

He enjoined respect for the religious leaders of every religion,[6] and rose above Hindu-Muslim religious controversy. Though he wrote volumes in refutation of hostile Christian missionary propaganda against Islam, he never penned a single line that savoured of disrespect towards Hinduism. His restraint seems all the more noble in contrast with the Arya Samaj's

1. Raja Jaykishan Das Bahadur, Secretary to Aligarh Scientific Society, to A. L. M. Philipps Esqr., 28 October 1867, Yusuf Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 81-3.

2. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

4. Sherwani, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

5. *Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq*, Vol. VII, Jumadi-ul-Awwal, cited by Shahid Hussain Razzaqi in *Sir Syed aur Islah-i-Muashira*, Lahore 1963, pp. 177-8

6. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

tirades against Islam.[1] He believed that political differences and religious prejudice should not be allowed to undermine the cultural basis of Hindu-Muslim amity. Hindus and Muslims were complementary to each other, allies in the progress of India—indeed, the two eyes of India.

(*c*) There were two facets of Sir Syed's politics: i.e. Muslim politics, and Indian politics. He acted as a Muslim leader in the over-all political context of India, that brought him on a common platform with Hindu leaders and leaders of non-Muslim minorities. Since Hindus constituted the majority and Muslims formed the largest minority their mutual relations dominated the political scene. Sir Syed's first concern was the promotion of Muslim interests; but this did not necessarily imply any antagonism towards Hindus interests. On the other hand, though, from the *Asbab* to the Ilbert Bill, he always spoke up for the rights of the Indian people as a whole, he never lost sight of his *locus standi* as the spokesman of Muslims *vis-a-vis* the Government and the Hindus. He endeavoured to define the Muslim position in Indian political life. No political co-operation could be fruitful without a definition of areas of mutual accord and a clear recognition of mutual differences. Though a protagonist of Hindu-Muslim unity he felt it could not be achieved through communal fusion, but through collaboration at the national level, where Muslims should have their rightful place in over-all political framework of the country. He looked upon Muslims and Hindus as two nations and always used the word *Qaum*,[2] which is synonymous with nation or nationality rather than the word community, which denotes a religious subgroup. However, his view of Muslim nationhood did not envisage a separate state, and did not exclude a united India. Hindu-Muslim unity was to be a partnership in progress, rather than the domination of the majority over a minority; for the Muslim identity could not be merged into the personality of majority.[3] However, Muslims could hold their own with the Hindu in political scale only if they matched their advancement in the field of social and educational progress. And if, instead, one nation was left backward that would not only constitute an obstacle to its own progress, but retard the overall political progress of the country as a whole.

1. Lajpat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

2. He used the word 'nation' with varying shades of meaning and has thus provided ample material for both, those who extol him as a Muslim separatist, and those who admire him as an Indian nationalist. In a speech on 27 January 1883, he declared that India was inhabited by two nations, but at the same time emphasized the need for unity, *Lectures Ka Majmua Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, pp. 132-3, also *AIG*, 4 August 1876.

3. The Hindus had a numerical superiority over the Muslims in a proportion of four to one. Sir Syed, *Ibid.*, p. 247.

He said, "If one nation advances in the scale of civilization and the other lags behind, then India would be no better than a one-eyed beauty."[1] The establishment of an equipoise between Muslims and Hindus thus became the keynote of his politics.

Sir Syed continued to co-operate with the Hindus for the attainment of more political rights from the Government, and made a common front with them on questions of mutual interest. Even the Hindu partisan attitude on the language issue had not damped his zeal for the national progress of India. In 1869, he was "happy that the cause of my countrymen has been well-served"[2] in England through the *Asbab*. He deprecated the Council Act of 11 August 1869, as the enslavement of India.[3] He made no discrimination in the political rights of the Hindus and Muslims. He was very sensitive about the dignity of Indians as human beings, and always espoused the cause of individuals beaten or oppressed by high-handed British officials. Sir Syed regarded the indignities and insults to which Indians were subjected by British officers as a challenge to the national honour of India.[4] The frequent murders of Indian by their British masters were not isolated acts of distemper, but reflected an attitude of contempt for Indian life:

> "And we are not only distressed that poor Indians have been killed in such a cruel manner, and that their blood has been shed with greater impunity than the blood of animals; but we are also aggrieved that the orders of the Governor are as ineffective as the petitions of the Indians...Would the poor Indians continue to fall victims to blows, kicks and sticks of the Englishmen? If so, then the claim of safety of life under the English Government would not be correct."[5]

He also protested against the unabashed hostility of the Anglo-Indian press displayed towards the Indian press:

> "Indian journalists for their freedom come in for a greater share of anger from the English journalists than they ever exhibit for any other section of the Indian population. And for this very reason, they are sometimes accused of flattery, or blamed for sedition....But we know full well, such allegations spring from that hatred that wells

1. *AIG*, 4 August 1876.
2. Sir Syed to Mohsin-ul-Mulk, 18 June 1869, *Khatut Sir Syed*, p. 35.
3. Sir Syed to Mohsin-ul-Mulk, 20 August 1869, *Ibid.*, p. 40.
4. *AIG.*, 17 March 1876.
5. Sir Syed's article, *Hindustanion Ka Khoon*, *AIG*, 15 September 1876.

up in their hearts for the apt and true expression of opinions by Indian newspapers."[1]

It is thus evident that, in the larger interest of India, he rose above Hindu-Muslim differences. In 1876, he still stood forth as an Indian leader; and the change in his political outlook from Indian to Muslim leadership was far from being complete. Perhaps he was still passing through a phase of internal conflict, which influenced his policy during later years as well. This hypothesis would reconcile the seeming contradiction in his role as an Indian and as a Muslim leader. He continued to uphold the policy of Hindu-Muslim co-operation even after both nations had begun to shift into a position of cultural polarity and political opposition towards each other. However, as the areas of Hindu-Muslim discord became enlarged after the anti-cow-slaughter movement and the creation of the Indian National Congress, he emerged predominantly as a Muslim political leader. Yet, even then, he was no enemy of the Hindus or an opponent of national freedom: his patriotism remained above reproach.[2]

(4) Sir Syed advocated that Indians should seek enlightenment about their rights in law, and should represent their needs and grievances to the Government in a constitutional manner. They should acquire education in order to qualify for participation in Government. Cooperation with the Government was required to gain experience in the working of representative institutions. In the *Asbab*, he had ascribed the rebellion to the absence of any communication between rulers and ruled.[3] The root of the trouble lay in the non-admission of the Indians to the Legislative Councils. It is significant that "the English public opinion began to think in the same strain as Sir Syed had observed in his book, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*."[4] Charles Wood, in his dispatch of 9 August 1861, endorsed the opinions of Sir Syed indirectly, as he expected "that the introduction of intelligent Native gentlemen into the Council will bring to its deliberations a knowledge of the wishes and feelings of the Native population..."[5] Though the Councils Act of 1861 did concede the

1. *AIG*, 10 March 1876, IOL. It would be noted that the Indian press at that time was predominantly a Hindu Press.

2. It is absolutely incorrect that he ever opposed the freedom of India or was inimical towards the Hindu nation. See *Mazamin-i-Muhammad Ali*, Delhi 1938, Muhammad (ed.), Sarwar, Vol. I, pp. 277-8.

3. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

4. I. N. Topa, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

5. Sir Ilbert Courtney, *The Government of India*, Oxford 1898, p. 562.

principle of associating Indians with the Legislative Councils, it was by no means the result of the *Asbab*, as fondly suggested by Hali.[1] However, it cannot be denied that, in India, Sir Syed stood forth as the godfather of the principle of Indian participation in Government. While he appreciated the appointment of Indians to the Supreme Council, he foresaw a Council that "will be composed of representative from every division or district, and thus the laws which it will pass will be laws enacted by the feelings of the entire country.[2] Surely his ideas were far more radical and democratic than the British legislators were ever willing to concede. While the Secretary of State was apprehensive of "something approaching to Colonial self-government"[3] for India, Sir Syed was dreaming of a representative Indian Assembly. Sir Syed tried to educate the people in representative institutions; and the very first issue of the Aligarh Institute Gazette carried an article on the British Parliament.[4] He sought to harmonize the interests of the Indians and the Government "with a view to benefit the Natives of India...thereby advancing the interests of Great Britain and India".[5] His role in the British Indian Association of the North-Western Provinces, during 1866, was noteworthy for his emphasis on the desirability of establishing a rapport between the Government and the Indian people on the basis of a representative system. In his inaugural address to the Association, he remarked that the Parliament had not been "sufficiently alive to the importance of Indian affairs" in the past; and even at present, it bestowed little attention "upon measures affecting the future welfare of the inhabitants."[6] He asserted that the time had come for Indians to represent their interests properly before the Parliament.[7] It was their duty to express their opinions freely and honestly about Government actions and enactments. He urged them to shed their feelings of fear and to stand for their rights. He admonished them: "Believe me that moral

1. Hali states that, in 1860, the *Asbab* was presented to the Government, and in 1861 the Councils Act was passed, p. 390; but on p. 388, he remarks that the Councils Act was not passed after reading the *Asbab*, but was implicit in Queen's Proclamation. The latter view seems more objective.

2. Graham, *op. cit*, p. 84.

3. Sir Charles Wood to Sir Bartle Frere, 18 August, 1861, Philips, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

4. Sherwani, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

5. *Bye Laws of the British Indian Association*, printed at Syud Mahmud's Private Press, 1867, IOL.

6. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

cowardice is wrong..."[1] He exhorted them to plead for their rights, as those who did not stand for their rights were likely to be disregarded.[2] Clearly, his motivation was democratic. He adored liberty, and burst into eloquence while talking of the democratic future of India:[3]

> "The word *liberty* has for us all a spell which causes the heart to beat more strongly, the breast to heave more proudly... When we possess an Indian Parliament, legislating mainly for the good of the country, filled by men whose fidelity is beyond suspicion, then shall bright days of India return, or rather brighter days than ever she possessed in the best of her times."[4]

The shape of representative institutions was not defined, though he supported a scheme to set up an Indian Parliament.[5] His liberal susceptibilities were hurt when Parliament passed the Council Act of 11 August 1869,[6] which enlarged the powers of the Secretary of State over the Government of India. He expressed his disappointment to his friend Mohsin-ul-Mulk:

> "In fact the Parliament has passed the law in all sincerity and for the best interests of India, in their own belief, but this is a mistake which is indescribable. In reality India has become a slave, and this Bill is most harmful for India. If such a law was enacted in England, all the people would have petitioned for its repeal."[7]

Six years later, he again reverted to the subject of an Indian Parliament in *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*. The long title of his article, "Practically it is not at all desirable to have a Parliament in India", was misleading, and has been misconstrued by a recent writer, who has asserted that Sir Syed opposed the elective principle.[8] An analysis of the article reveals

1. *Ibid.*, p. 92. Sir Syed's speech was remarkable for its tone and content. The words of Sir Syed, "I am afraid that a feeling of fear that Government or the district authorities would esteem you factious and discontented, were you to inaugurate measures like this... deters from coming forward for your country's good..." find a sympathetic echo, for their declamatory style, emotional intensity, and love of liberty, in the words of Cotton twenty years later, "If it is disloyalty to wring concessions from the Government by all fair means within their power, they are disloyal..." See Cotton, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-6.

2. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94. This dictum reflects the influence of John Stuart Mill.

3. Sherwani, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

5. *AIG*, 28 December 1866, cited by Sherwani in *Ibid.*

6. Philips, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-3.

7. Syed Ahmad Khan to Mohsin-ul-Mulk, 20 August 1869, *Khatut Sir Syed*, p. 40.

8. M. S. Jain, *The Aligarh Movement, Its Origin and Development, 1858-1906*, Agra, 1965, p. 112. In this case, Jain has also made an error in his reference, since the article referred to does not appear on pp. 561-63 and 789-92 in the *AIG* of 1875, but on pp. 442-46.

that there was little change in Sir Syed's views, though his tone was less emotional :

> "Though no Parliament has been established in India, and no Indian elected to it; though neither the British Parliament has granted this right to them, nor the Indians have advanced to qualify for its membership, it is no less a boon that the people have become acquainted with the name of the Parliament. They have come to know what is the relation of subjects with the Government, and to what rights the subjects are entitled....This progress is a good omen....The Indians also are gifted with the same qualities of head and heart as the Englishmen, and as such they have the same right to progress. If the Englishmen can be the members of the Parliament, so can the Indians....Though the right of Indians is thus established it does not mean that it should be conceded to them immediately. To have a right and to benefit from that right are two different things."[1]

He then exhorted the Indians to acquire education and gain experience to enter Parliament, and muster their means for this purpose. He concluded:

> "This is not the time for grant of rights, and the idea of the establishment of a Parliament in India is absurd. If an Indian is included in the Parliament in England,[2] we would not oppose it so much, as the establishment of a Parliament in India."[3]

If Sir Syed considered it impracticable to set up a Parliament in the political context of 1875, he stated a fact which in no way contradicted his earlier belief in the British type of democracy as a political goal for India. If he now emphasized that Indians should first acquire education, and then demand their rights, it was a reiteration of his old plea that lack of education was the real obstacle to the progress of India.[4]

1. *AIG*, 16 July 1875.

2. It may be noted here that Dadabhai Naoroji was the first Indian to be put up as a candidate for a seat in the British Parliament, and this did not happen until 1888. See *The Voice of India*, August 1888, IOL. This fact further proves that Sir Syed's thinking on this question was far ahead of his times.

3. *AIG*, 16 July 1875.

4. He thought that "an increase of enlightenment is equivalent to an increase of wealth...". Sir Syed's speech before the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta, October 1863, See Yusuf Hussain, *op. cit.*, p. 10. He also considered English education essential not only for the sake of employment, but also for the larger benefits of political understanding. See extract of the Memorial of the British Indian Association of N. W. Provinces, 1867, submitted on its behalf by Sir Syed, *Maqalat*, Vol. VIII, pp. 57-58.

It was no new pretext invented to retract from his faith in democracy as alleged by Jain. In so far as he did entertain any reservations about the practice of democracy, these were not born out of any communal bias, but arose from his considered opinion that Indians were not yet in a position to manage representative institutions. However, when the elective principle was introduced in local self-government, albeit on a limited scale, a profound change had occurred in the outlook of the major communities. Questions arose about how the elective principle should be applied in the particular circumstances of the Subcontinent. Should the interests of the Muslim minority be subordinated to the general will of the majority, without any reservation; or should the elective principle be re-adjusted to safeguard Muslim minority *vis-a-vis* the Hindu majority? In this, priorities of a fundamental nature were involved, what came first: Indian nationalism or Muslim nationalism? For Sir Syed, Muslims came first.

The interaction of these four factors in the changing circumstances shaped his political outlook and created the kaleidoscope of his politics that invested his leadership with a sense of pragmatism encompassing all aspects of Muslim life. Any attempt to highlight one facet of his principles at the expense of others would be like cutting a segment from a panorama and would distort the overall perception of his politics, which unfolded itself in an organic progression rather than a chronological sequence. Instead, it would be more meaningful to assess the impact his political ideas had on Muslim political trends emerging towards the end of the 19th century.

Sir Syed and the Civil Service Agitation

The Civil Service agitation symbolized a change in the Indian political outlook, which held equal significance for Muslims and non-Muslims. The Indian press interpreted the Government decision to lower the age limit of Indian candidates for the Indian Civil Service examinations[1] as "a way of excluding natives of India from competitive examinations."[2] Sir Surendranath Banerjea protested against this discrimination; and "by his earnestness and enthusiasm created an agitation in Upper India."[3] Sir Syed was no less concerned about the exclusion of Indians from the

1. Minute by the Viceroy dated 26 September 1883, Correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State for India, relating to the age at which candidates for the Civil Service of India are admitted for competition in England. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1885, (*C. 4580*), Vol. 58.

2. Sadharni, 14 May 1876, *BNNR, 1876*, IOL.

3. *Bharat Sangskarak*, 16 July 1877, *BNNR*, 1877, IOL.

higher services, and exerted himself to promote the cause of the Civil Service Movement—an aspect of his political career that has seldom received attention much less an appreciation. His ideas on this were very similar to those of Surendranath Banerjea, and *The Aligarh Institute Gazette* observed that... "this reduction in the age limit will have the effect of practically shutting the doors on the native candidates to the covenanted service."[1] The paper also urged Indians to hold meetings all over the country and to "draw up memorials protesting against this change."[2] Soon after on 29 April 1877, Sir Syed established an Association to provide financial assistance to Hindu and Muslim youths of requisite qualifications to pursue higher studies in England.[3] This Association was well received by all sections of the Indian community. *Safeer-i-Hindustan*, a Christian paper, commenting on this scheme, wrote, "none excels Syed Sahib in seeking the progress of the country."[4] A correspondent writing under the pen-name, '*Saf-go*', however, accused the Association of being as useless as the M. A. O. College, in which according to him, no non-Muslim was admitted. He maintained that Sir Syed was motivated by a desire to secure personal glory through the creation of the Association.[5] '*Saf-go*' was later refuted by Kashi Nath, from Allahabad, who asserted that "This is the only rational solution of the present great difficulty."[6] A Muslim correspondent praised the Association as a practical scheme for the solution of Indian hardships, and added that "Since he has no personal aims to fulfil, all the newspapers of India are beholden to him for his work."[7] Sir Syed had, in fact, organized his association on a non-sectarian basis to benefit all communities.

Being a realist he responded positively to the problems arising from the reduction of age limit. Sir Syed organized the Association on his own independent initiative. However his personal commitment to the Association did not, in any way, prevent him from extending his co-operation to Surendranath Banerjea. When Banerjea visited Aligarh on 21 June 1877, Sir Syed extended a warm welcome to him on behalf of the Indian Association of the North-Western Provinces. Acknowledging "the utmost kindness"[8] with which he had been received, Banerjea addressed

1. *AIG*, 23 March 1877, *NWPNNR*, 1877, IOL.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq*, Jamada 1294 A. H., cited in *Maqalat*, Vol. VIII, pp. 142-48.
4. *Safeer-i-Hindustan*, Amritsar, 9 June 1877, PUL.
5. *Ibid.*, 16 June 1877.
6. *Ibid.*, 23 June 1877.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, London 1925, p. 49.

a meeting chaired by Sir Syed.[1] In his presidential address Sir Syed criticized the reduction of the age limit, and asked the audience "to take into consideration the injuries which will thereby be inflicted on India, and to adopt such measures in the matter as they thought desirable."[2] Later, the meeting adopted the memorial that Surendranath Banerjea had drawn up for submission to Parliament.[3] This was followed up by a resolution which recorded that "this meeting contemplates with regret the reduction of maximum age limit for candidates."[4] The second resolution requested the Government "to satisfy the just aspirations and recognized claims of the people of India", and maintained that "to facilitate their admission to the Civil Service of their own country, it is necessary that, simultaneously with the open Competitive Examinations in London, similar examinations should be held in India, where a definite proportion of appointments may be competed for every year."[5] The demand for fixing an Indian share in the Civil Service reinforced the rationale of the Civil Service agitation, and was evidently adopted under the influence of Sir Syed. The meeting also agreed that members of the Indian Association should sign the memorial before its submission to Parliament.[6] It redounds to Sir Syed's credit that all these resolutions were passed with joint Hindu and Muslim support, for which he had also successfully mobilized the Indian Association.

Sir Syed continued to identify himself with this movement, and his interest in it did not cease after the meeting at Aligarh as suggested by Ram Gopal.[7] Inspired by Sir Syed's example, Muslim leaders of the Punjab made common cause with Surendranath Banerjea, and participated in a public meeting addressed by him in Lahore. Subsequently, Khan Bahadur Barkat Ali Khan, Nawab Abdul Majid Khan and Sayyid Nadir Ali Saifi, Editor of *Rahbar-i-Hind*, all disciples of Sir Syed, agreed to represent the Muslims in a subcommittee which was formed to promote the aims of the Civil Service agitation in the Punjab.[8] Khan Bahadur Barkat Ali Khan,

1. Ram Gopal asserts that Sir Syed presided over this meeting "in response to the request of Banerjea..." See *Indian Muslims*, Bombay 1946, p. 48. But this statement is neither verified by Banerjea, nor corroborated by the proceedings of the meeting published in the *AIG*, *Supplement*, 26 June 1877.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

8. *Akhbar Anjuman-i-Punjab*, 8 June 1877, PUL.

one of the Vice-Presidents of the Indian Association of the Punjab, participated in the Association's meeting, on 29 July 1877, which decided that signatures on the memorial should also be obtained from the mofussil before its submission to the Parliament.[1] Sir Syed's identification with the Civil Service agitation was also reflected in the views of his son, Syed Mahmud, who was not satisfied "with the new system for the admission of natives to the Civil Service",[2] and in February 1882, submitted two memoranda to the Governor General, in which he outlined a scheme for the establishment of a Native Civil Service with terms similar to those of the Covenanted Service.[3] Although Ripon appreciated the scheme, saying, "It seems to me that there is much sense, *prima facie*, in a good deal what he says...",[4] in the end, the Government did not approve it.

In 1883, Sir Syed revived his Association of 1877 in a new form by founding the Mahomedan Civil Service Association. He impressed upon the Muslim aristocracy to give attention to the education of their sons. He admonished them: 'No nation can claim respect without its share in Government',[5] and Muslims could aspire to such a share only if their youth were equipped with higher education. This was the real need. Since aristocrats often neglected the education of their sons, he thought it advisable to sponsor young men from the middle class. He devised ways and means to enable them to obtain an education in medicine, engineering and law, and encouraged them to prepare themselves to compete in the Indian Civil Service Examinations in England.[6] A preparatory course for this purpose, was started in the M. A. O. College, Aligarh.[7] Sir Syed also tried to organize local branches of the Muslim Civil Service Fund Association throughout Northern India.[8] It seems that in the beginning the response to his call was encouraging. Meetings were held in "Shialkot (sic) and other places of note",[9] and as a result, a "great many notable Mahomedans"[10] joined the Association. The practical steps envisaged by the Association were appreciated by several Hindus;

1. *Ibid.*
2. Ripon to Lyall, 8 June 1882, *LYC, File No. 40*, IOL.
3. Mahmud to Primrose, 7 February 1882, *Correspondence in India, RC*, BM.
4. Ripon to Lyall, *Ibid.*
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 300-301.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 301.
9. *Akhbar-i-'Aam*, 6 October 1883, cited in *The Voice of India*, 1883, IOL.
10. *Akhbar-i-Daroolsultanat*, 3 October 1883, cited in *Ibid.*

and in 1884, some 50 members of the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Indian Association, Lahore, expressed their desire that Hindus should also be eligible to benefit from the Muslim Civil Service Fund Association. For this purpose, they also promised to subscribe to it gladly.[1] But the Muslim Civil Service Fund Association did not have such a poor start as Hali indicates that it had no more than 299 donors.[2] By 3 September 1884, rupees 2810 were collected mostly from the Punjab. But it failed to create any widespread enthusiasm and following a period of sporadic interest evinced by some individuals, it fizzled out by 1886. This Association failed due to the apathy of the Muslim aristocracy and to the fact that the Association's objective did not concern a widely or urgently felt need. In those days, when there were just about a score of graduates among the Muslims of Northern India, not all of them possessing the brilliance which could have enabled them to compete in the Indian Civil Service examinations in England, this Association had only a remote appeal. The first graduates of M. A. O. College, Aligarh, appeared in 1881; and by 1898, only 126 students had graduated from that institution.[3] Under the circumstances, the Association was bound to fail. And, although he had established the Association with sincere high hopes, Sir Syed was the first to realize that, in current circumstances, it was not serving any useful purpose, and he let it die without regret. From its very inception the Association was not in any way, intended to be in opposition but in apposition to the Civil Service agitation. At no stage it assumed the shape of a rival of Surendranath Banerjea's movement, remaining only a complementary effort to help the backward Muslim community to catch up with the Hindus in education and employment. This point is also supported by the fact that Sir Syed did not withdraw his support from the Civil Service agitation until 1885.

Although the Civil Service agitation had begun to stir "the rising generation",[4] and by 1883 had become a source of anxiety for the Government, Sir Syed continued to give it his active support, without fear of British displeasure. Surendranath Banerjea was jailed for contempt of court in the Salig Ram case,[5] Sir Syed presided over a meeting held to express

1. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 301. See also *Rahbar-i-Hind*, 17 January 1885. It is interesting to note that while Hali put the total of subscriptions at Rs. 4001, *Rahbar-i-Hind* estimated that Rs. 2810 were collected from the Punjab alone. Since this would leave the North-western provinces with a surprisingly meagre contribution, it is possible that Hali may not have been in full possession of all the facts of the case.

3. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

4. Cotton, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

5. *Bengalee*, 2 May 1883, IOL. In a case, an English magistrate ordered Salig Ram, a Hindu idol, to be brought to his court. Hindus were incensed and Banerjea led a protest against this sacrilege.

sympathy with him, on 17 May 1883 at Aligarh. At the same time, Sayyid Mir Imdad Ali, an adversary of Sir Syed, also presided over a meeting at Agra, in which the "eminent services rendered to the country"[1] by Surendranath Banerjea were acclaimed. *The Mahomedan Observer* of Calcutta commented that he had been "given more than exemplary punishment."[2] Evidently, Muslims of all shades of opinion sympathized with Surendranath Banerjea; and their sympathy was all the more significant since the Salig Ram case had arisen out of disrespect shown to a Hindu god by a British Magistrate, and that it neither involved the Civil Service question nor concerned Muslim interests in any way. In this context, apart from Sir Syed's personal regard for Surendranath Banerjea, his identification with the Bengali Hindu leader shows a readiness to cooperate with the Hindus not only on the question of the Civil Service, but also for the protection of Hindu religious sentiments. Predictably, Sir Syed's support for Surendranath Banerjea piqued the Anglo Indian Press which "read with feelings of incredulity"[3] the proceedings of the Aligarh and Agra meetings. It was a matter of shock and regret for them that a man of Sir Syed's "ability and attainments",[4] who has been "treated as a trusted adviser to the Viceroy's Council",[5] should have sided with a movement which had questioned the verdict of a High Court. He was called upon to render a public denial"[6] of his conduct. Another letter to the Editor conceded Sir Syed's right to preside over a meeting held in support of Surendranath Banerjea, but questioned the wisdom of his action.[7] The indignation of the Anglo-Indian Press surprised the Indian newspapers.[8] *Najm-ul-Hind*, while expressing sympathy with Surendranath Banerjea, demanded legislation to protect the liberty of Indian journals.[9]

Like the Anglo-Indian Press, the Government felt perturbed over the excitement that had stirred both Hindus and Muslims. Surendranath Banerjea was taken to be a symbol, "a patriot has been smitten for the love of the country."[10] commented the *Akhbar-i-'Aam*. Sir Syed also

1. *The Pioneer*, 19 May 1883, IOL.
2. *The Mahomedan Observer*, 26 May 1883, cited in *The Voice of India*, June 1883.
3. Letter to the Editor by "Observer", *The Pioneer*, 24 May 1883.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Letter to the Editor by 'A. F.' *The Pioneer Mail*, 3 June 1883.
8. *Akhbar-i-'Aam*, Lahore, 16 June 1883, cited in *The Voice of India*, June 1883.
9. *Najm-ul-Hind*, Moradabad, 4 June 1883, cited in *Ibid.*
10. *Akhbar-i-'Aam*, Lahore, 13 June 1883, cited in *Ibid.*

sympathized with him. Ripon advised the Lt. Governor of Bengal "to allay the excitement",[1] and to desist from making Surendranath Banerjea into a martyr. The outburst of Muslim sympathy for "that miserable Bengalee Editor"[2] also caused concern to Lyall, the Lt. Governor of the North Western Provinces, who regretted that both meetings, at Aligarh and Agra, "were presided over by two leading Mahomedans of very opposite schools, Imdad Ali, C. S. I., an orthodox Islamite...and Syed Ahmed, C. S. I., the Broad Church Musalman and member of Council. I cannot see what sympathy these men can have with the Bengalee except on the broad ground of Indian versus European..."[3] Lyall thought that the Salig Ram case "could not make any general stir",[4] but was worried about the Muslim display of sympathy to a reaction against the "insolent writings of the Bengal Europeans against natives generally."[5] Lyall examined the official reports about the Aligarh meeting, and concluded that "the demonstration does not appear to be of an alarming or explosive nature."[6] The political situation after these two meetings, however, appeared grave enough to Lyall to bring these meetings to the notice of the Governor General. Thereafter he gathered more facts and "received trustworthy information from various places where meetings were held.... All accounts combine to show that these meetings were got up by local Bengalee sympathizers, indirectly actuated by wire-pulling from Calcutta. In these meetings, the people at large take no interest, and it has excited no religious feeling at all among Hindus."[7] Lyall also obtained an explanation from Sir Syed of his role in the Aligarh meeting:

> "Syed Ahmed sent me a long letter, explaining that his action in the matter had been very cautious and colourless. I believe that he and Imdad Ali allowed themselves to be persuaded by the astute Bengalee into joining them."[8]

It seems that the interpretation Lyall put on these events suited his preconceived notions and did not conform to the facts. Since Sir Syed's letter has not been preserved, it is not possible to determine what he did in fact say; It is difficult to give *prima facie* credence to Lyall's version which not only exposes Sir Syed to charges of gullibility but also deni-

1. Ripon to Rivers Thompson, 15 May 1883, *R. C., Correspondence in India,* B.M.
2. Lyall to Baring, 23 May 1883, *LYC, File No. 40,* IOL.
3. *Ibid.*, see also Lyall to Primrose, 24 May 1883, *LYC, File No. 39,* IOL.
4. Lyall to Primrose, 24 May 1883, *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Lyall to Primrose, 26 May 1883, *Ibid.*
7. Lyall to Primrose, 30 May 1883, *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*

grates him for rendering an abject apology for his well-considered independent opinion. Indeed, subsequent events show that Lyall had little regard for Sir Syed's intelligence and integrity. Since Lyall had asked for Sir Syed's explanation, and Sir Syed had allegedly assured him of his inconspicuous role in the Aligarh meeting, it was in fitness of things that Sir Syed should have heeded the warning of the Lieut. Governor, and eschewed any further activity in the Civil Service agitation. But he remained undeterred. It was exactly a year later, on 17 May 1884, that he again presided over a meeting addressed by Surendranath Banerjea.[1] Mohsin-ul-Mulk described this meeting as "memorable in many ways, as after that there had never been held such a meeting in which the Hindus and Muslims were so close to each other on political or semi-political matters."[2] Surendranath Banerjea spoke on matters ranging from the Civil Service to the Indian Volunteer Corps, and from the elections to the Legislative Council and the reform of the Indian Constitution.[3] As President of the meeting, Sir Syed openly identified himself with these demands. A few weeks later, he endorsed these demands in his articles in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* of 5 and 7 June 1884.[4] He joined Surendranath Banerjea in a petition[5] to the British Government and also submitted a separate memorandum to the Governor General. This is confirmed by Ripon, who quoted from it in order to strengthen his own argument against the reduction of the age limit for the Civil Service:

> "A kind of political discontent has arisen among the educated classes of the natives of this country on account of the reduction of limit of age for candidates for the Indian Civil Service. When this measure was brought forward, the educated natives thought that the real object of Government in doing so was to exclude natives from the Civil Service appointments, and by this means the Government wanted to deprive its subjects of their rights... and that political discontent has since then taken a firmer root, and I consider it the duty of every one who is loyal to his Government to pray to God to erase the root of that discontent...".[6]

1. *AIG*, 17 May 1884, *NWRNR*, 1884, IOL.
2. *AIG*, 16 May 1903, cited in Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 329.
3. *AIG*, 16 May 1903, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 290.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 286.
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 311.
6. Minute of the Viceroy, 10 September 1884, "Correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State for India, relating to the age at which candidates for the Civil Service of India are admitted for competition in England," *Parliamentary Papers, 1885*, (*C. 4850*), Vol. 58, SUL.

Sir Syed's memorandum made such an impression on Ripon that he considered it as a piece of politic advice; so that, after quoting from it, he posed the following question:

> "I would ask whether it is wise or politic to keep up this 'kind of political discontent', especially among men from whose ranks are drawn the writers in the press, the speakers at public meetings, the pleaders before our courts, and not infrequently the officials of Native States."[1]

It is evident that Sir Syed reflected the national sentiment in these public meetings and in his memorandum. He had done his duty to the people by representing their demands to the Government in a loyal and straightforward manner. He gave expression to the prevalent Muslim mood as well, since the Muslims had been no less agitated than the Hindus. The tone of the Muslim press was anything but pleasant. When Kimberley, the Secretary of State, refused to accede to the request of an Indian deputation that had asked for the raising of age limit, a Muslim paper of the metropolis commented:

> "We are not aware of the extent of Lord Kimberley's experience in the matter, but our experience has proved that since the reduction not a single Indian candidate has been able to offer himself for examination."[2]

The paper considered the age reduction as a "cunning plan" to debar Indians from the examination."[3] Kimberley's refusal evoked Muslim resentment and disillusionment with the Liberal Ministry.

> "We do not think however, that we can sit quietly, and view with composure the answer of our present Secretary of State...".[4]

The Muslims thus felt that the "absurd restrictions"[5] on the age limit were causing distress among Indian youth and, by the middle of 1884, it appeared that they were beginning to gravitate towards an anti-Government stance.

It was at this time that Sir Syed's views on the Civil Service question began to show signs of change. He had co-operated with Surendranath Banerjea from 1877 to June 1884; but by the end of 1884, he began moving in a different direction. Why did he part company with Surendranath

1. *Ibid.*
2. *The Mahomedan Observer*, 12 April 1884, cited in *The Voice of India*, 1884, IOL.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *The Mahomedan Observer*, 3 May 1884, cited in *Ibid.*
5. *Najm-ul-Akhbar*, Moradabad, 8 June 1884, cited in *The Voice of India*, 1884, IOL.

Banerjea after such a long association? Neither Graham,[1] nor Hali[2] have given an answer to this question. Surendranath Banerjea's writings also do not help in this matter.[3] But in their eagerness to uphold the Congress thesis, certain latter day writers like Tufail Ahmad Manglori, conclude that Sir Syed was deflected from the Civil Service agitation under the spell of Beck, the youthful Principal of M. A. O. College. This inference has been drawn from the reminiscences of a certain Mir Wilayat Hussain, who had participated in the Aligarh meeting 51 years earlier.[4] The argument has also been reproduced in a recent work on Indian Muslims.[5] But there appears to be little plausibility in the view that Sir Syed executed a political somersault under the influence of Beck who was neither his superior in intellect nor in position. That Sir Syed, who could hold his own against Hunter on the question of Muslim loyalty, who could stand up to refute Muir's defamatory book on the Prophet, and who despite Lyall's displeasure had continued to support Surendranath Banerjea, should have been beguiled by a newly appointed subordinate and that, too in such a matter of political conviction; asks us to stretch our imagination beyond the bounds of possibility. Indeed, so far was Beck from holding a position of influence over Sir Syed that his relation to him was that of a son to a father—and that too in the Victorian, not the modern, context.[6]

Therefore, Sir Syed must have had his own reasons for this change of outlook, which in fact was both fundamental and dramatic. Sir Syed had not forgotten the Hindu-Muslim difference on basic issues, which he had again emphasized in his speech in the Viceroy's Legislative Council on 12 January 1883, about 10 months before the appointment of Beck in November 1883.[7] The preservation of Muslim rights had remained his first principle and on this he had never been prepared to compromise. Taken together, the Civil Service agitation and the Ilbert Bill controversy of 1883 had begun to overshadow more immediate Muslim interest. He did not like the violent turn that events appeared to be taking:

1. Graham's work published in 1885, does not make any mention of this question.
2. *Hali, op. cit.*, p. 311.
3. Surendranath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
4. *AIG*, 16 May 1903, cited by Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 289.
5. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.
6. Kennedy, J. "Personal Reminiscences of Sir Syed Ahmad," *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Third Series, Vol. VI, No. 11-12, July 1898, p. 149. Surely Kennedy's account, being contemporary, is preferable to Mir Wilayat Hussains' account, which appears to be an after thought.
7. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

"It is doubtful, whether since the Indian Mutiny, there has been a time when the public mind was roused to such red heat of passion as we saw with alarm, not unmingled with regret, in 1883."[1]

Sir Syed could not be party to a state of affairs that might have destroyed Muslim gains in return for an elusive right. Sir Syed's agreement with the Civil Service agitation was not unconditional. He had supported the agitation to safeguard Indian representation in the Civil Service and Banerjea's struggle in the larger interests of Hindu-Muslim amity, otherwise it did not require any exceptional intelligence to understand that neither raising the age limit nor holding of simultaneous examinations in India would in any manner respond to the immediate needs of the educationally backward Muslims. When the Civil Service agitation began to assume an anti-British and a violent stance, Sir Syed decided to desist from any further collaboration with it, since any diminution of loyalty was not compatible with Muslim interests at that time. He could not be insensitive to the signs of wariness the Government was again showing towards the Muslims, of which Lyall's letter had been a forewarning. Sir Syed could not risk a prospect in which the Government's apprehensions about Muslims would again turn into hostile suspicion.

While Sir Syed's ideas about the Civil Service agitation were undergoing a transformation, the Indian Association decided to finish its separate political identity by merging itself in the newly formed Indian National Congress. Now the time had come for Sir Syed to re-appraise the Muslim position on this issue. Did the Muslims really need the simultaneous examinations? Did they stand to gain from the raising of the age limit? Were these aims important enough for Muslims to seek their fulfilment through participation in the Indian National Congress? Undoubtedly, these demands were not relevant to prevalent Muslim needs to justify their joining a predominantly Hindu political organization. Back in 1877, Sir Syed had refused to lend his support to the political programme of the Central National Mahomedan Association;[2] and he was still averse to any Muslim involvement in politics. So he decided to discourage Muslims from entering the Congress through the back door of the Civil Service agitation. As a matter of fact, he had already reached a parting of the ways with Surendranath Banerjea by the end of 1884, and it was probably only due to his regard for Banerjea that he did not make his exit a public issue. After 1884, he just faded out of the Civil Service agitation. Though he still regretted the lowering of age

1. *Bengalee*, 5 January 1884, IOL.
2. *Memoirs*, p. 33.

limit,[1] his enthusiasm for the cause had ebbed away, and Muslims in general had also begun to drift away from the Civil Service agitation. Sir Syed did not formulate any new policy on this question, and remained content to study the political situation for the next two years. He appears to have sensed that the stage was set for a full reappraisal of political issues in their totality. His views on this issue were brought into clearer focus as a result of his membership of the Public Service Commission in 1886.

While the Hindus and Muslims were engrossed in the Civil Service agitation, the Government was not insensitive to the intensity of Indian feeling on this issue. In December 1881, Ripon forwarded "some important proposals for the reorganization of the Civil Service both Covenanted and Uncovenanted."[2] In February 1882, Syed Mahmud submitted his memorandum on the establishment of a Native Civil Service[3] that in all probability reflected Sir Syed's views as well. But his memorandum was not accepted. Later, Ripon agreed with most of the members of his Council "that the reduction of that limit from 21 to 19 was a mistake, and that it would be desirable at the first convenient opportunity to return to the arrangement formerly in force."[4] He also emphasized that "Natives are practically excluded from the home competitions altogether."[5] However, in view of the Ilbert Bill agitation, he decided "that the present is not a favourable moment for re-opening the question..."[6] A few days later, he forwarded memorials from certain Associations in the Lower Provinces of Bengal,[7] to the Home Government, and suggested that when it decided to reconsider the question, the Local Governments should be given "an opportunity for expressing opinions after full inquiry as to the practical working of the present system in this country."[8] In early 1884, Ripon felt that the time for a re-examination of the issue had come.[9] But Ripon's enthusiasm was not shared by

1. *Akhbar-i-'Aam*, 19 July 1884, PUL.

2. Ripon to Hartington, 17 December 1881, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, RC*. These proposals were submitted to Ripon by Mr. Inglis, who was a member of the Legislative Council.

3. Mahmud to Primrose, 7 February 1882, *Correspondence in India, RC, op. cit.*

4. "Minute by His Excellency the Viceroy," 26 September 1883, *Parliamentary Papers, 1885, (C. 4580)*, Vol. 58, SHL.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. "Letter from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, No. 69, (Public)", Simla, 1 October 1883, *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. Ripon to Kimberley, 20 January 1884, *Correspondence with Secretary of State for India, RC.*

Kimberley. And since Ripon's viceroyalty was drawing to a close, he could do no better than to leave the solution of the problem to his successor. Dufferin reopened the question with Kimberley, who again expressed his dissent from Ripon "on the point as to the age of candidates."[1] Though Kimberley was willing to "remove dissatisfaction as far as possible,"[2] he was all the same determined to "face the educated Baboo",[3] and to uphold the English supremacy in the Statutory Civil Service at all costs. Later in the year, when the First Indian National Congress passed certain resolutions regarding the holding of simultaneous examinations and the raising of age limit,[4] this question was again brought into political limelight. British policy was already moving in the direction of a reappraisal and Kimberley conceded that the demand for simultaneous examinations merited "careful consideration."[5] But feared that "the clever Bengalis quite unfit to rule, carry the lions share in such a competition."[6] Subsequently, Kimberley sent his proposals, on the Civil Service to Dufferin, who gave them his "hearty acquiescence."[7] It was in the light of these proposals that the Governor General in Council issued the Resolutions of 4 October and 4 November 1886, constituting the Public Service Commission: "The inquiry of the Commission should extend not only to the system under which Natives of India are at present admitted... to the Covenanted Civil Service...but to their employment in all branches of the public service...".[8] The Commission was required "to do full justice to the claims of Natives of India to higher and more extensive employment in the public service;"[9] and it was instructed to examine "the advantages and disadvantages of competitive selection in India...".[10] The Government attached considerable importance to the work of the Commission, which it was hoped would serve as a preparation for a Parliamentary inquiry into Indian affairs.[11] The Commission included four Hindu and two Muslim members, out of a total of 15 members.[12] Kazi Shahabuddin was

1. Kimberley to Dufferin, 8 January 1885, *Dufferin Collection, Microfilm No. 517*, IOL.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Kimberley to Dufferin, 22 April 1886, *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Dufferin to Kimberley, 11 June 1886, *Ibid.*
7. Report of the Public Service Commission, 1886-7, Calcutta 1888, p. 1.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
12. *Ibid.*

nominated to its Bombay Committee, and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to its Committee for the North-Western Provinces and Lower Provinces of Bengal.[1]

Nothing was farther from the mandate of the Commission than to stimulate the formulation of Muslim public opinion; but it so happened that, when the question of simultaneous examinations was posed to Muslims all over India, it served to synthesize Muslim opinion on this question. The crystallization of Muslim opinion was a gradual process and free from any taint of official influence. Sir Syed, and Kazi Shahabuddin took the lead in arousing Muslim interest and the consequent emergence of Muslim consensus on this issue could best be gleaned from the evidence Muslims from different provinces gave before the Commission. An analysis of this cumulative evidence reveals that, except for a few cases of dissent, Muslims all over India were unanimous in their concern for the protection of Muslim rights in the Civil Service. In general, they were favourably disposed towards the raising of the age limit, but were opposed to the holding of simultaneous examinations; and therefore were not prepared to give unqualified support to the Congress demands. The evidence of Punjabi Muslims typified the broad pattern of Muslim unanimity. Sirdar Muhammad Hayat Khan, C. S. I., submitted that the statutory system of service was "not understood by the general public, but the enlightened members of the community regard it with dissatisfaction."[2] He favoured the raising of the age limit,[3] but did not endorse the holding of simultaneous examinations, arguing that the Hindus were bound to keep their lead even if the examinations were held in England. He feared that as a result, a "preponderance of one class of persons would give rise to dissatisfaction to the other."[4] He suggested that it would be desirable to fix a proportion between Hindus and Muslims on a population basis not only for Covenanted, but for the Uncovenanted Service as well.[5] At that stage, Sir Syed raised the question of what elements should be included in the Hindu community.[6] He was inclined to exclude the low castes, while counting Sikhs among the Hindus. As a corollary, the Sunnis and Shias were to be counted together as members of the Muslim nation.[7] This question was more than

1. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
2. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission, Punjab*, Vol. I, Section II, p. 9.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*

a mere exercise in demography,[1] as it symbolized a new political trend among Hindus and Muslims to define their separate identities *vis-a-vis* each other, in order to secure an equitable share in government employment. It was thus a pointer towards the separate communal development of the future. Sheikh Nanak Baksh, a pleader of Lahore, felt that open competition in India would give Hindus a greater advantage,[2] and therefore favoured the idea that a definite proportion be established between Hindu and Muslim appointments in Government service.[3] For this purpose, he enumerated the people he thought qualified to be classified as Hindu and Muslims, respectively, contending that the low castes should not be counted as Hindus.[4] Munshi Nizam-ud-Din, President of the Zamindari Reforming Society, suggested that the examinations should be held in every province, as all provinces had not "reached the degree of advancement."[5] He urged that "with regard to the Punjab the appointments be competed for between the Hindus and Mahomedans separately, because otherwise Mahomedans would not have a chance."[6] He also proposed that since Hindus and Muslims constituted the two largest communities, they should be proportionately represented in Civil Service.[7] Nawab Abdul Majid Khan of Multan preferred nominations to the competitive examinations, otherwise the existing system would result in "the almost entire exclusion of Mahomedans from a share of Government appointments."[8] He was opposed to simultaneous examinations in India, which he thought would give an advantage to Bengalis, and also to holding of examinations on a provincial basis which would also enable the Hindus to dominate the Government services. He warned that "The steady improvement and rise of one class and steady degradation and fall of the other" would be undesirable.[9] Advocating nominations by Local Governments, he maintained that, "Considering the existing circumstances, it is desirable that Government appointments in each province should be shared by Hindus and Mahomedans in proportion to their respective provincial population".[10] Maulvi Inam Ali, a nominee of the Anjuman-i-

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*

Islamia of Lahore, favoured proportionate Hindu and Muslim appointments.[1] Muhammad Shah, a nominee of the Anjuman-i-Islamia Society of Amritsar, observed that a "no favour policy is naturally commendable to the middle classes;"[2] but was not suitable for the backward Muslims. Munshi Muharram Ali Chishti, Editor of *Rafiq-i-Hind*, asserted that the educated Hindus had created a lot of "sectarian jealousy,"[3] by starting the anti-cow-slaughter agitation, inciting communal riots, fanning the Urdu-Hindi controversy, and organizing economic boycotts of Muslims in certain towns.[4] In these circumstances, Muslims could have little confidence in the good faith of Hindus while the system of open competition would give them even greater power and add to their arrogance:

> "There are many different sects in India between whom there can be no sympathy and who have no confidence in each other. To say that India is one nation, or that Hindus and Mahomedans agree is a great mistake."[5]

The general trend of the statements of Muslim witnesses, and in particular that of Munshi Muharram Ali Chishti, made on 23 December 1886, invited hostile comments from *The Tribune*, which accused Muslims of being collaborators of the Government. The paper alleged that the Muslim evidence about "the riots, the newspaper writings and the subordinate and ministerial services"[6] was being welcomed by the Government, and warned the Muslims that the Government "cares as little for Mahomedans as for Hindus, herein gets something to divert the attention of the public from the main issue."[7] However, the Punjabi Muslims paid little attention to such advice from Hindu newspapers; and the Muslim associations endorsed the opinions of the leading Muslims. The Anjuman-i-Islamia Society of Lahore considered it desirable to maintain fair proportion between Hindus and Muslims, as "it would prevent the undue preponderance of one class over the other class."[8] The Anjuman-i-Islamia Society of Gujrat recommended separate examinations in each province and advised that "candidates should be selected in proportion to the classes of the population. Mahomedans should compete with Mahomedans, and

1. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
6. *The Tribune*, 22 January 1887, cited in *The Voice of India*, February 1887, IOL.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission, Punjab*, Vol. I., Section III, p. 5.

other castes with other castes."[1] The Anjuman-i-Islamia Society of Amritsar, going a step further, proposed that "The appointments should be distributed among Hindus and Mahomedans in equal shares," without any reference to their relative strength in the population.[2] It however, also favoured simultaneous examinations, and the raising of the age limit.[3]

Muslim thinking in the North-Western Provinces followed a similar pattern. Syed Habib Ullah, Bar-at-Law, supported the proposal to raise the age limit, but felt that simultaneous examinations in India would result in a Bengali monopoly.[4] Maulvi Sami Ullah Khan, advocating selection from Hindus and Muslims, did not specify their proportion. He thought that the age limit should be raised, but did not favour simultaneous examinations.[5] Syed Mahmud complained that the new Native Civil Service was not regarded as equal to the Covenanted Service, and, in this connection referred to his memorandum of February 1882. He was opposed to holding competitive examinations in India, as the people of this subcontinent lacked homogeneity.[6] Munshi Ahmad Ali, Editor of *Akhbar Azad*, Lucknow, was also opposed to simultaneous examinations, which he thought would give advantage to the Bengalis.[7]

Ali Ahmad, a member of the Anjuman-i-Islamia of Jubbulpur, giving expression to the feelings of the Muslims of the Central Provinces, opposed simultaneous examinations, and advocated recruitment by nominations for all types of appointments.[8]

Ghulam Muhammad Munshi, a Muslim reformer of Bombay, endorsed both raising the age limit and simultaneous examinations, but proposed that the number of appointments for Indian candidates should be fixed for each province, and that out of these "proportionate shares must be made between the members of the principal religious sects. Otherwise, an important community, like that of Mahomedans, now being neglected in education, will be equally left behind in the Public Service."[9] Mahomed Rahimtulla Sayani, a solicitor of the Bombay High Court, also

1. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
4. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission, N.W.P. and Oudh.*, Vol. II, Section II, p. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
8. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission, Central Provinces*, Vol. III, Section II, p. 21.
9. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission, Bombay*, Vol. IV, Section II, p. 35.

recommended a higher age limit and simultaneous examinations and thought that if it was feared that "some prominent Native race forming a large portion of the entire Indian community" would be excluded, "a temporary provision be made for apportioning the appointments."[1] It is pertinent to note that, despite his allegiance to Congress policies, Mr. Sayani had to concede at least the temporary desirability of proportionate communal representation in the Public Services. Husen Ali, President of the Sind Branch of the National Mahomedan Association, complained that the Muslims of Sind, though "more than two-thirds of the population,"[2] were grievously disappointed as no appointment in the Statutory Service had ever been given to a Sindhi Muslim. He feared that the competitive system "will take away the last chance Mahomedans have at present."[3] He suggested that appointments should be fixed for Hindus, Muslims and other communities in every province.

Munshi Ahmad Muhiuddin, Secretary of the Anjuman-i-Islamia of Madras and Editor of the *Muslim Herald*, while approving an increase in the age limit, pleaded "that strict regard be paid to reasonable equality in the number of candidates from each section...",[4] checking the "monopoly of any particular class".[5] He recommended that backward classes, which besides Muslims also included some sections of Hindus, such as Marathas, Rajputs and Sikhs, should receive "special consideration from the State, not for all, but a reasonable extent of time."[6] Mir Mazhar Ali, a delegate of the Anjuman-i-Islamia of Salem, also advocated raising the age limit, but opposed simultaneous examinations.[7]

Maulvi Syed Muazzam Hussain, Presidency Magistrate, Calcutta, favoured a "limited competition among nominated candidates; for instance, Mahomedans should be tested with Mahomedans, because of their backwardness in education would make it unfair if they should be pitted against Bengalis".[8] The Hon. Amir Husain considered the age limit a matter of detail, since the real issue was how far the Government was "prepared to go in appointing Natives to higher appointments."[9] He approved of the competitive system on the condition that a proportion

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission, Madras*, Vol. V, Section II, p. 114.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-9.
8. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission, Bengal*, Vol. VI, Section II, p. 113.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

of appointments was exclusively reserved for Muslims competing with each other.[1]

In this context, it is also interesting to note the evidence of Surendranath Banerjea, who was now prepared to accept recruitment to the Statutory Civil Service on a provincial basis.[2] He claimed that his views were shared by the people, and that he spoke for them. At this, Kazi Shahabuddin asked, when you speak in the name of people, "Do you speak for your own people, the Hindu?"[3] Surendranath Banerjea replied "I speak for the Bengali Mahomedans also."[4] But his claim to represent Muslims as well is not supported by the overwhelming mass of Muslim public opinion in Bengal as well as elsewhere. The parting of ways had been reached, though not consciously accepted. The emergence of a Muslim consensus on the question of Civil Service appointments reveals the polarity between Hindu and Muslim positions, which amounted to much more than a matter of concern about jobs. The Muslim consensus from Lahore to Madras, and from Karachi to Calcutta was significant because it symbolized the inner unity of the Muslim nation, as it came out with an identical response to a given political challenge. This consensus also constituted the backdrop to the Muslim opposition to the Indian National Congress. The Muslim rejection of open competitive examinations held the germ of their future opposition to the Congress, so that the stage for Muslim opposition to the Congress had already been set between 1886 and 1887. Sir Syed's speech of December 1887 only articulated an existing reality and as such his speeches of Lucknow and Meerut marked the climax of a process in Muslim political thought rather than being the prelude to a new policy.

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-1.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
4. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER III

NAWAB ABDUL LATIF AND THE MAHOMEDAN LITERARY SOCIETY

The career of Nawab Abdul Latif symbolized the growth of a new trend in the Muslim politics of Bengal. Forming a link between traditional Muslim political thinking and its reorientation under British influence, his career embraced the agony of transition. His pioneering efforts for Muslim uplift pointed like a signpost to the new direction of Muslim politics. Born in March 1828,[1] he passed his boyhood in an environment of religious ferment and economic discontent, as the Muslims of Bengal were seething with anger against the British rulers and their Hindu collaborators. Though the Muslims were a vanquished people, they still cherished their ideals of religious freedom and economic independence; so that when they found that the East India Company, in league with Hindu landlords, was bent upon denying them their cherished rights, they took up arms against their oppressors.

The Permanent Settlement had already resulted in the transfer of the lands of Muslim zemindars to Hindu revenue collectors.[2] The introduction of English as the official language resulted in the elimination of Muslim elements from education. Naturally, the Muslims construed the reform in education as an attempt to secularize Muslim society. Under these circumstances, the religious reform movements became a means for the articulation of the Muslim protest against the oppression and exploitation of the East India Company. In early 1831, the *Faraizi* movement took a militant turn;[3] and soon thereafter, the Bengali Muslims discovered

1. M. Mohar Ali, *Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur, Autobiography and Other Writings*, Chittagong 1968, p. iii.

2. Ameer Ali, 'A Cry from the Indian Mahomedans', *The Nineteenth Century*, August 1882, p. 196.

3. *The Calcutta Review*, 1870, Vol. 51, p. 178, IOL.

that the Wahhabi movement presented a means of Muslim revival.[1] They made their mark in that movement by "their intellectual superiority."[2] Nisar Ali, better known as Titu Mir, gave practical shape to the ideas of Sayyid Ahmad Brelvi. He was "determined to institute a *Jihad*"[3] against the Company and its proteges, who had denied them the freedom to exercise the rites of Islam freely. After his victory against the Hindu zemindars, Titu Mir "openly proclaimed the extinction of the Company's rule, and claimed sovereign power as the hereditary right of Mahomedans, which had been unjustly usurped by Europeans. Everything seems to have done deliberately and in pursuance of a settled design."[4] Though Titu Mir was finally defeated and killed in his struggle against the Company, the ideal of an independent Muslim community continued to live in the hearts of Muslims. Later, Muhammad Mohsin struggled to achieve that ideal, but also failed in the face of British military might. The successive military failures left the Muslims with no illusions about any hope of succeeding in an armed struggle against the British, who were vastly superior in power and resources. Hence, after 1841, Bengali Muslims faced the dilemma that British rule, which was repugnant for both religious and economic reasons, could neither be overthrown nor accepted. It was a living problem for the Muslims who brooded over it in sullen isolation for many years, till in the latter half of the sixties, Nawab Abdul Latif effected a rapprochement between the Muslims and the British.[5]

Nawab Abdul Latif's career was nothing less than a lifetime of service for his co-religionists. His achievements are best understood in the perspective of the principles that inspired him.

His appraisal of the Muslim predicament led him, like Sir Syed, to the conclusion that cooperation with the British was essential if Muslims were ever to find their way out of their down-trodden condition. Therefore his primary concern was to bring about conciliation and understanding between the Muslims and their British rulers. He sought to pacify Muslim scruples against British rule by holding it up as a *Dar-ul-Islam*.[6] This would have been no more than a half-measure if, at the same time, he had not exerted himself to make English education acceptable to Muslims. He was convinced that English education would not only establish a bridge of understanding between the ruler and the

1. *Ibid.*, vol. 50, p. 104.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. 51, p. 179.
4. *Ibid.*
5. For a fuller discussion see Chapter I.
6. *Ibid.*

ruled, but also open up new avenues of social and political progress for the Muslims of Bengal.

Since Muslims lacked an organization to canalize and direct their social, educational and political activities, he established the Mahomedan Literary Society in April 1863. He projected the grievances and needs of the Muslims through that Society to the Government, and, at the same time, used it as an instrument to disseminate information on Government actions among his people. The Mahomedan Literary Society became a prototype for other Muslim organizations throughout the country; and the success achieved by the Society in furthering the Muslim cause reflected the genius of Nawab Abdul Latif. In a way, Nawab Abdul Latif's role in the Mahomedan Literary Society marked a prelude to the political awakening of Muslim Bengal.

His interest in Muslim education began to find concrete expression in 1848, when he was appointed Anglo-Arabic Professor in the Calcutta Madrassa, and thereafter kept on manifesting itself in persistent efforts to promote "the cause of English generally and Mahomedan education in particular."[1] Although he gave up teaching in 1849 for a judicial appointment, he continued to exercise his "influence in persuading and inducing the Mahomedan Community, who had kept themselves aloof, to join in the Educational Movement."[2] He was well-qualified for that task by virtue of his Oriental learning and English education. He had received an English education at a time when Muslims considered it an anathema. Unlike those who, after their English education, began to labour under a sense of inferiority about Oriental learning, Nawab Abdul Latif acquired a sharper appreciation of the Muslim cultural heritage. He never lost sight of the religious objectives of Muslim education, and was careful not to generate any conflict on that question. Islamic ideas, he felt, should form the central theme of Muslim education, towards which end the teaching of English should be combined with the traditional disciplines in Arabic and Persian. The stultified curricula of traditional Oriental learning carried no conviction with him. But the Muslim aversion to English education—intensified by the fact that it was subjected to the domination of Christian missionaries—stood in the way of his educational reform. In addition, at that time, the Government was also not enthusiastic about the promotion of Muslim education. It was therefore not easy to break the barriers of Muslim antipathy.

"In those days the Mahomedans neglected even the special institutions

1. *SAPEM*, pp. 209-210.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

for giving instruction in their classics, while in general educational movement they scarcely took any part. This was not only a cause of much decadence among the Mahomedans themselves, but also a source of administrative difficulty and might possibly be a political danger."[1]

Muslim backwardness grieved him, and he sought to analyse its causes. He concluded that so-called administrative reforms had resulted in "the gradual displacement"[2] of Muslims from the legal profession, and that, after the introduction of English as the official language, the Government no longer had any use for the erstwhile Muslim employees in its administration. The Government rather unfairly attributed Muslim aloofness from English education to "the pride and the great bigotry of the Mahomedans."[3] This view was far from the whole truth, since the Government had its share of responsibility in perpetuating the Muslim antipathy.

"The British Government, in the consciousness of irresistible might, felt itself under no obligation to conciliate prejudices. The Mahomedan bigotry, such as it was, was not inherently worse than the prepossessions of other communities. There were certainly practical difficulties in the way of the best disposed Mahomedan families. No attempt was made to adopt the institutions and the system of education to the needs of Mahomedan life or the peculiarities of Mahomedan Society.[4]

But the Hindus had switched over from Persian and Urdu to English without any qualms of conscience, since, for them, both Persian and English were foreign languages. The Hindus rapidly acquired an English education, and by virtue of that availed themselves of the opportunities opening up in business and Government employment. Soon after, they began to exercise their influence on Government policies, and "educational measures were taken for the most part in concert with these Hindu gentlemen".[5] It was thus not surprising that Government policies were not compatible with Muslim requirements in education and employment, and that Government persisted in its one-sided policies.

The removal of Muslim backwardness therefore required a change in this Government policy; and Nawab Abdul Latif did play what he called

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

his "humble and inadequate part"[1] in bringing about such a change. His first opportunity came in 1853, when his suggestions for the reform of syllabi at the Calcutta Madrassa resulted in the establishment of the Anglo-Persian Department, and placing greater emphasis on English in the junior grades.[2] In the same year, he sponsored a prize essay competition in Persian on the subject of "Advantages of an English Education to the Mahomedan youth in India and the most unobjectionable means of imparting such instruction."[3] He had a hearty response, and the competition did succeed in stimulating some educated Muslims to take an interest in English education. Seventeen years later, Sir Syed organized an essay competition on similar lines and for a similar object.[4] Nawab Abdul Latif began to advocate that the Muslim students should be provided full facilities for an English education at the Calcutta Madrassah.[5] The Hindus and Christians had their own colleges,[6] whereas the Muslims did not have the funds to establish a separate college of their own, and were obliged to seek admission in a Government college. The Government responded by deciding to establish the Presidency College, which was "chiefly for the benefit of the Mahomedan students",[7] though it was open to students of other communities as well.

At that time, the affairs of the Mohsin Trust had fallen into disarray, not so much from Muslim neglect, as from a misguided Government policy. This was a matter of considerable concern for Muslims, "and loud were the complaints made, not only by the Mahomedan residents of Hooghly, but by the entire Mahomedan community of Bengal."[8] The Government had diverted Rs. 50,000 from the income of the Mohsin Trust to the Hooghly College, where about 1,000 Hindu students were getting English education.[9] This diversion of Trust funds was doubly objectionable. Firstly, the testator had endowed the Trust for the promotion of Islamic religious education, and it was now being used for the propagation of secular English education. Secondly, there was not the least justification for using its funds for the uplift of another community, particularly since Muslims never had access to such benefits from Hindu endowments.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 214.
4. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-24.
5. *SAPEM*, p. 214.
6. *The Indian Daily News*, 1 March 1873, cited in *SAPEM.*, p. 215.
7. *SAPEM*, pp. 214-15.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

Nawab Abdul Latif submitted a Minute on the Mohsin Trust to the Government, which was later published as a pamphlet in 1863. He advocated the utilization of the Mohsin Trust funds to make the Hooghly Madrassah "the basis of sound system of Anglo-Arabic Education, *exclusively* for the members of the Mahomedan community."[1] It was after a protracted struggle against official obstuseness that in 1873 he at last succeeded in securing the proper utilization of the Mohsin Trust.

Deep Muslim concern was aroused when in 1869, the Government began to entertain thoughts of closing down the Calcutta Madrassah, which had by that time, developed into a major centre of Muslim education. Nawab Abdul Latif took up the cause of the Madrassah and wrote a paper outlining the history of Muslim education in Bengal, and read his paper in a meeting of the Bengal Social Science Association on 3 January 1868.[2] The president of the meeting, Mr. Justice Phear, thanked him for having highlighted Muslim fears and aspirations, and went on to make the following comment:

> It ought never to be forgotten that the Mahomedan population was lately predominant in this country, and the recollection of their former power in connection with their want of social importance was liable to engage feelings not of the most desirable nature....We had not long ago experienced that the disaffection of the Mahomedans may be a serious evil,...therefore, that no opportunities should be lost of conciliating them by a spirit of fairness and justice and giving them the means of acquiring a good English education, without which they could have no chance of catching up with their more successful rivals.[3]

It is evident that, as a result of his efforts, the Government began to appreciate the political dangers of Muslim backwardness. In 1869, the Government ordered an inquiry into the affairs of the Calcutta Madrassah and appointed him as a member of the enquiry committee.[4] Although the committee spun out its work over two years, Nawab Abdul Latif made a valuable contribution towards the formulation of constructive conclusions.

In 1871, he was appointed as a member of the management committee of the Calcutta and Hooghly Madrassahs.[5] In the meantime, he kept on pressing the Government with "repeated representations",[6] on the proper

1. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

utilization of the Mohsin Trust. At last, Sir George Campbell, was moved to take up the question of the Trust with the Supreme Government, and recommended the use of its funds for the Madrassahs at Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi.[1]

Lord Northbrook ordered the release of Mohsin Trust funds for Muslim education, and also enhanced the existing grants of the Calcutta and Hooghly Madrassahs. Nawab Abdul Latif "felt the greatest gratification"[2] when in 1873, after 12 years of efforts, he succeeded in reforming the Mohsin Trust. In the same year, he was appointed to a committee of the Calcutta University, and then pleaded for the exclusion of those texts from the English courses of study which carried misrepresentations against Islam. He wrote a Minute on that subject, and argued that the inclusion of objectionable texts in the syllabi "gave rise to that suspicion among the orthodox classes of the people that the non-interference policy of the Government was not faithfully observed."[3] In 1877, when Lytton appointed him to work on a similar committee, he took the opportunity to discuss the question of Muslim education with him. Nawab Abdul Latif again recorded the views in a Minute, which he submitted to the Governor General.[4] This time he took exception to Scott's *Talisman*, which bristled with abuses about the Holy Prophet. He warned:

> "Mahomedan guardians may well feel alarmed for the national self-respect and religious integrity of their children obliged to make such works their daily study. How little confidence they must feel in measures of an Educational Administration in which the feelings of their Community are negligently trifled with, if not wantonly insulted."[5]

He stated that Muslim fathers had represented to him in doleful terms about such textbooks. He urged the Government to mitigate the "de-orientalizing and de-nationalizing" effects of Western literature and thus remove that gratuitous source of alienation" between the Government and the Muslims.[6] He pointed out that "a radical defect in all book-selection in India lay in this that the books are not adopted to the wants of native life."[7] The Viceroy promised to take note of his views.

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 250.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 251.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

In 1882, he appeared before the Education Commission, but confined his evidence "to the question of Mahomedan Education in Bengal and Behar, shewing the present state of Primary, Middle Class and High Education in that Community and the best means of improving the same, and indicating the Vernacular languages in which instruction should be imparted to Mahomedans in Bengal and Behar".[1] At the same time, he expressed his views on the Memorial of the Central National Mahomedan Association,[2] which were later published in the form of a pamphlet entitled "Paper on the present condition of the Indian Mahomedans and the best means for its improvement."[3] Nawab Abdul Latif had the satisfaction of having his views "carefully considered, and most of them adopted, by the Education Commission."[4] It is significant that, soon after the submission of his Memorandum, he was granted an interview by MacDonnel, the Secretary of the General Department of the Government of Bengal, who was opposed to the ideas of Syed Ameer Ali.[5] Nawab Abdul Latif told him about his objections to the abolition of the Rajshahi Madrassah for the sake of finding funds to raise "the Calcutta Madrassah to the status of a College."[6] In 1883, Lord Ripon honoured the Calcutta Madrassah by presiding over its prize distribution ceremony, and in commemoration of the viceregal visit, Nawab Abdul Latif instituted scholarships for Muslim students.[7] Therefore, in 1884, the Viceroy ordered the abolition of the Rajshahi Madrassah and the opening of college classes at the Calcutta Madrassah.[8] Later, Nawab Abdul Latif exercised his influence in support of the Muslims of Rajshahi for their memorial to the Lt. Governor of Bengal, who then agreed to the restoration of the Madrassah on a limited scale.[9]

His services to the cause of Muslim education were acknowledged by the Government and by Muslims of Bengal who sought to name a street after him.[10] It would be unfair to emphasize his services to the Muslims of Bengal only for he made lifelong efforts to rouse his all co-religionists "from the lethargy into which they had unfortunately fallen."[11] He

1. *Ibid.*, p. 255.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
3. For fuller comment see Chapter V.
4. *SAPEM*, p. 265.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 266. See also Chapter V.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 268.
10. *Hindoo Patriot*, 6 May 1878, IOL.
11. *SAPEM*, p. 281.

visited the main towns of the North-Western Province and the Punjab and also went to "the principal cities in Western and Southern India" in 1882.[1] During those visits, he discussed the problems of Muslim education with leading local Muslims. He addressed meetings of the Muslim gentry in Haiderabad (Deccan), Madras, Bombay, Baroda and Patna. He exhorted the Muslims "to throw off their indifference, and to assume their true position in the race for distinction."[2] His contribution to the cause of education in general was no less remarkable. Undoubtedly, Nawab Abdul Latif was the pioneer of Muslim education in Bengal, and his achievement in that field was comparable to the role of Ram Mohun Roy in Hindu education. He was the first Muslim reformer to popularize English education, and in that he enjoys precedence over his greater contemporary, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

The Mahomedan Literary Society

Solicitude for Muslim welfare pervaded the whole gamut of Nawab Abdul Latif's official career, but without tainting it with any bias against the Hindu, who therefore acclaimed his fairness and justice as a magistrate.[3] Given the limited scope for political activity in those days, this concern also manifested itself in making judicious use of his official opportunities to improve the lot of Muslims and remove injustices under which they laboured. He served a period of political apprenticeship during his struggle for the emancipation of Muslim ryots from the clutches of the indigo planters.[4] These planters were Englishmen who acted in collusion with the Hindu zemindars, and utilized Hindu agents and middlemen to operate their "system of ruinous oppression and slavery."[5] The ryot was forced to cultivate indigo "in the very best lands possessed by him",[6] and debts were foisted upon him to reduce him to a state of serfdom. The planters also managed to manipulate the measurement of land for indigo cultivation in such a way that they got, one fourth to one half more than the stipulated area for this purpose. The ryots were compelled to sell their produce "at a fixed rate of Rs. 4 per *maund* while the market rate

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. Nawab Abdul Lateef Khan Bahadoor, *A Short Account of My Public Life*. Calcutta 1885, Appendix A, p. 33, IOL. (Henceforth referred to as SAMPL).
4. Mohar Ali has explained the reasons which prompted Abdul Latif to suppress his role against the indigo planters from his autobiographical account. Mohar Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. xi-xii.
5. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
6. *Ibid.*, p. vii.

varied from Rs. 10 to Rs. 30.[1] They were cheated by unscrupulous agents who underrated the size and weight of their indigo bundles. Under this system of unmitigated exploitation "not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained by human blood."[2] The main area of indigo plantations stretched over the districts of Eastern Bengal "where unfortunately, the vast majority of the tenantry consisted of Muslim population."[3] The ryot had no legal remedy against this extortionist system, because he was too poor and too ignorant to challenge the might of the English planters and Hindu zemindars who had banded themselves into an association for the protection of their vested interests. Hindu reformers like Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Raja Dwarkanath Thakur did not lift a finger to save the ryots, but on the contrary favoured the extension of indigo plantations to even larger areas of rural Bengal. Thus, in the early years of the Company's rule, the system of indigo plantation remained inviolate, since the servants of the Company were foremost in that loot. It was not till 1854 that the Government tried to remove some of the evils of the "system of indigo feudalism".[4] Nawab Abdul Latif was one of the first and foremost Indian officials to highlight the iniquity of the system of indigo plantations. He pleaded for the amelioration of the plight of the poor ryots; but the indigo planters were of course in no mood to put up with such effrontry, and that too from a native official; so they contrived to humiliate him in every way.[5] But he found support from among higher authorities; and the Government later appointed the Indigo Commission, whose investigations brought about the closure of most of the indigo factories in Eastern Bengal.[6]

But his political career began in 1861, after thirteen years of service as a judicial officer in some of the most difficult districts. It may be inferred that it was the ability and uprightness which he so amply displayed in the discharge of his official duties that, in January 1862, led to his appointment as a member of the Legislative Council, which had been set up under the Councils Act of 1861. He was "the first Mahomedan ever appointed, and at that time the only one in any of the Legislatures, local or Imperial."[7] Indeed, it was a rare distinction. In 1863, he introduced

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
3. *Ibid.*, p. ix.
4. *Ibid.*, p. x.
5. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *SAMPL*, p. 4.

and carried "though in the face of strong opposition,"[1] a Bill for the regulation of hackney carriages in Calcutta, which proved to be an advantage for the public. In the same year, he was appointed a Justice of the Peace; and for the next thirteen years continued to serve his countrymen to the best of his ability. His experience of public affairs in various districts of Bengal had sharpened his awareness of Muslim backwardness, and convinced him of the need to organize a society to guide them on the path of progress. He secured the cooperation of many leading Muslims of Calcutta, who agreed with this proposal.[2] Nawab Abdul Latif held a meeting of Muslim notables at his house; and there the Mahomedan Literary Society was launched on 2 April 1863. The Mahomedan Literary Society was "anxious to imbue its members with a desire to interest themselves in Western learning and progress, and to give them an opportunity for the cultivation of social and intellectual intercourse with the best representatives of English and Hindoo Society."[3] The first meeting of the Society was presided over by Maulvi Muhammad Wajeeh, who was the acknowledged head of learned and respectable classes of the Mahomedan Community in Bengal."[4] Nawab Abdul Latif read a paper in Persian on "the advantages of such meetings for the purpose of imparting useful information to better classes of the Mahomedan Community, who were mostly unacquainted with the English language."[5] The Society decided to assume the role of a forum; and clearing house of Western learning. In the end, Maulvi Wajeeh's paper, "Refuting some of the Doctrines of Wahhabis,"[6] was read. As a loyal body, the Society aired its misgivings about the Wahhabis, trying to discredit certain Wahhabi religious beliefs, and to impart an air of justification to the persecution of the so-called Wahhabi heterodoxy by the Government. In fact, the Society had, from its very inception, entertained a bias against the Wahhabis, and later enlarged the sphere of its activities against them. Following up on the "unqualified success" of their first meeting, the Society held its second meeting on 13 May 1863, in which papers were read "on such useful subjects as the Uses of History, the Origin of News-

1. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

2. *A Quarter Century of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta, A Resume of its Work from 1863 to 1889, Calcutta, (abbreviated as QCML)*, p. 145.

3. *SAMPL*, p. 16.

4. He was the head professor of Arabic in the Calcutta Madrassa, *QCML*, p. 145.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

6. *Ibid.*

papers, Commerce, Arts, Agriculture and Geography."[1] That meeting attracted a large audience; and it was decided to hold monthly meetings of the Society. But the Society was not able to adhere to this resolve, and there were occasional gaps between meetings, sometimes extending to several months. Nevertheless, the Society did blaze a new trail for the Muslims of the subcontinent. Nawab Abdul Latif commented:

> "A new departure had been made, and the path of success opened to the cultivation of new methods of thought long neglected by the Community."[2]

The sixth meeting of the Society, held on 6 October 1863, was attended by Sir Syed Ahmad, then the Sadar Ameen of Ghazipur. Sir Syed gave a discourse in Persian, on "Patriotism and the necessity of promoting knowledge in India",[3] which was widely appreciated. The Society became a model for Sir Syed; and soon after his return from Calcutta, he wrote a pamphlet outlining his plan of a Scientific Society. He sent this to Nawab Abdul Latif, inviting him to become a member of the proposed society, who wrote back to say:

> "I need scarcely say that I gladly become a member of the proposed society. You know well that I have long been engaged in trying to advance our countrymen in the scale of civilization and enlightenment...it gives me the highest gratification and encouragement when I see others engaging in the same work, and then I am only too glad to aid."[4]

He also emphasized the benefits of English education and learning through the medium of English:

> "Unless we learn all the modern arts and sciences we cannot expect to take any rank in the scale of nations nor to live in that friendship with the rest of our race which ought to be the case. Without knowledge of them we are not thoroughly qualified to hold public situations, to carry on trade properly...We must keep this in mind that these arts and sciences are not to be learnt by means of translations only but must also be learnt in the original language. English, therefore, must be diligently cultivated by us."[5]

It appears that, at that time, Nawab Abdul Latif's ideas about an English education were more advanced than those of Sir Syed. Nawab Abdul

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
4. Abdool Luteef Khan to Syed Ahmad Khan, n.d., Yusuf Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
5. *Ibid.*

Latif's letter was read out by Sir Syed in the first meeting of the Scientific Society, held on 9 January 1864; and Nawab Abdul Latif was appointed a member of the Directing Council of the Scientific Society.[1] They thus co-operated with each other for the cause of Muslim education. In 1864, Sir Syed informed him that the general meeting of the Scientific Society had decided to exchange its publications with those of the Mahomedan Literary Society, as desired by Nawab Abdul Latif.[2] The contemporary press considered the proposed Scientific Society as a "fit supplement"[3] to the efforts of Nawab Abdul Latif for the promotion of Muslim education. It is evident that Sir Syed did not hesitate to follow the example of Nawab Abdul Latif for a good cause, though his ardent biographer has failed to give any credit to Nawab Abdul Latif, and makes the rather unacceptable statement that Sir Syed had already thought of the necessity of the Scientific Society, and visited Calcutta in order to popularize the aims and objects of his Society. Facts do not agree with Hali on this point.[4]

The Society grew in strength and popularity; and its tenth meeting, held on 6 May 1864, was attended by 800 Muslim gentlemen from Calcutta and its suburbs. For one year, the Society functioned on an ad hoc basis; but when it had proved its usefulness, the Society held its first annual meeting on 30 May 1864, at which it framed rules for the conduct of its affairs.[5] Maulvi Muhammad Wajeeh was elected president, and Nawab Abdul Latif was chosen as its secretary. Since the Society had adopted the method of election for appointment of its office-bearers it assumed a definite shape and method.

Apart from holding meetings, the Mahomedan Literary Society, organized lectures, prepared learned papers on Oriental and Western arts and sciences, and submitted memorials on subjects of socio-political importance to the Muslims of Bengal in particular and of India in general.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
2. Syed Ahmad Khan to Moulvi Abdul Latif Khan, 9 September, *Ibid.*, p. 70.
3. *The Hindoo Patriot*, 26 October 1863, cited in *SAPEM*, p. 223.
4. Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-77. Hali states that Sir Syed published a pamphlet proposing the establishment of a society for the translation of English works. While Hali tends to put the publication of the pamphlet before Sir Syed's visit to Calcutta, Nawab Abdul Latif stated that it was sent to him after his guest's return to Ghazipur. Sir Syed received replies regarding his proposal from Kempson on 30 September 1863, from Colvin on 11 October 1863, and from Clarmont Daniel on 30 November 1863. See Yusuf Husain, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4. The testimony of the *Hindoo Patriot* about the proposed Scientific Society of Sir Syed further suggests that Hali had not got his facts right.
5. *QCML*, p. 147.

The Society began the practice of holding annual *conversaziones* in Calcutta; and after the *conversazione* of 1885, other associations tried to emulate the example set by the Society.[1] In line with the gatherings of the elite in the salons of contemporary Paris and London, the annual *conversaziones* used to be bright social functions, attended by the British, Muslim and Hindu gentry, who met in an informal atmosphere and engaged in discussions on an intellectual plane. While the Society provided a cordial social atmosphere in which Muslim notables could come in touch with the selected few who mattered in the Government, Nawab Abdul Latif also endeavoured to mould them into instruments of enlightenment. The Society had no pretensions to being a Muslim mass organization; but, in its later stages, it did claim to represent the Sunni Muslims of Bengal. Indeed, Nawab Abdul Latif was emphatic about the Society's role as the most representative body of Sunni Muslims, who were also opposed to the Modernism symbolized by the Shia leadership of the Central National Mahomedan Association.[2] Though the Society was primarily an educational and social organization, it did also assume a political role. Much of this was devoted to interpreting official policies to present them in an agreeable form to the Muslims. On such occasions, the Society tried to approach the Muslim public directly, although sometimes, its appeal was also extended to the Hindus, as in the case of the first census of Calcutta in 1865.[3] However, the Society played its most significant political role in representing Muslim grievances and Muslim views to the Government. The Society always adhered to the principle of loyalty in its representations to Government, and so enjoyed its confidence. But though the Society remained loyal in its outlook and methods, it transformed its loyalty into a dynamic element of Muslim progress. The Society gained a considerable measure of Muslim support, and in 1867 could boast of a membership of five hundred.[4] It is not clear whether non-Muslims were also admitted as regular members; but it is on record that many English and Hindu gentlemen participated in its meetings and delivered speeches. By virtue of its moderation, the Society also enjoyed some popularity among the Hindus. In the ultimate analysis, Nawab Abdul Latif symbolized the spirit of the Society; and his achievements, whether in public life or in the Legislative Assembly, cannot be isolated from the framework of the Society.

1. *SAMPL*, p. 18.
2. W. S. Blunt, pp. 97-98.
3. *SAMPL*, pp. 40-41.
4. S. C. Baley, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Moulvie Abdool Luteef, Khan Bahadoor, 23 April 1867, cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

The foundations of the Society were well-laid, and it continued to build upon its position of trust and confidence with the Government and the people. It attracted public notice in 1863, when Nawab Abdul Latif held a meeting of the Muslim gentry in order to send an address of congratulations to the Queen on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Wales, followed by addresses sent to the royal couple. *Bengal Harkaru* acknowledged the initiative taken by the Society with the comment that "Our Mahomedan fellow-citizens have stolen a march upon us—at least, so far as words go."[1] The paper also commended the Society's role in fighting the deep-seated Muslim prejudice against Western education, and making them aware of the social and political needs of the times.[2] When an Agricultural Exhibition was about to be held in Calcutta towards the end of 1863, many disquieting rumours were spread among the people about the intentions of Government. Nawab Abdul Latif wrote a paper in Urdu in order to enlighten the people about the aims and objects of the Exhibition and to allay their ill-founded fears, and also translated it into Bengali for larger circulation in the mofussil areas.[3] The Government appreciated his wise and timely action, which contributed to the success of the Exhibition. The Society made its mark when it organized its "*First Grand Conversazione*" for the promotion of social intercourse and interchange of thought among the different communities."[4] Held in the Town Hall on 13 March 1865, the *conversazione* was attended by 2,000 gentlemen, "the majority of whom were Mahomedans,"[5] and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal also attended. In the same year, the Government organized the First Regular Census of Calcutta; and, once again, wild rumours spread, gripping the populace with panic on the eve of the Census. Several families fled into the jungles, "the impression being, that either some wholesale raid on the female population of their locality was contemplated, or that the Government was collecting materials for an assessment of taxes on a more comprehensive scale."[6] Nawab Abdul Latif fought against the spate of such rumours, and exerted his influence to restore the confidence of the people in Government. He publicized the real intentions of the Government by writing a paper on the aims and objects of the Census. The paper was read in a meeting of the Mahomedan Literary Society and the Bethune Society. Since the

1. *Ibid.*, Appendix F, p. 37.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
4. *QCML*, p. 147.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *SAMPL*, pp. 26-7.

audience in that meeting was small and selective, he translated the paper into several Indian languages, published it at his own expense, and distributed it free for the local population.

In 1865, the Legislative Council of the Government of India began the consideration of a Bill which sought "to legalize, under certain circumstances, the remarriage of native Converts to Christianity," and referred the matter to a Select Committee. The Muslims were greatly perturbed, as "several Sections of the Bill were opposed to Principles of Mahomedan Law,"[1] and began to entertain apprehensions of religious intolerance and intrusion upon the privacy of their female relatives. Aware of Muslim discontent on the subject, Nawab Abdul Latif sought to canalize it into positive channels. He organized a meeting of leaders of the Muslim community at his residence, and drew up a memorial to the Government. The Muslims of Bengal, in a temperately worded memorial, pleaded for exemption from the operation of the Bill, pointing out their objections to it, and "represented that by the Law of their Religion, which is also the secular Law applicable to marriage and divorce, the conversion of either husband or wife from Mahomedanism entails a cancelment of the marriage so complete that the partners cannot remarry without certain special formalities."[2] The Memorialists cited legal authorities in support of their argument, and pointed out the social dislocation the passing of the Bill was likely to cause in Muslim family life. The Select Committee of the Legislative Council examined the memorial critically, and noted that the position taken by the petitioners was correct according to Sunni jurisprudence, but thought it proper "to communicate on the subject...with the Moojtuhid, the Religious Head of the Sheah, (sic) Mahomedan Community." The Shia leader, giving his opinion, observed that "the law laid down by him corresponds exactly with the allegations of the petitioners."[3] The unanimity of Sunni and Shia views left the Government with no option but to exempt the Muslims from the operation of Act XXI of 1866. Obviously, the benefits of that exemption were available to all the Muslims of India; and as such this achievement of the Mahomedan Literary Society can be considered its first success on an all-India basis. No other Muslim organization or leader could match it at that time. It was no mean achievement in view of the distrust that still soured relations between Government and Muslims. By 1866, Nawab Abdul Latif, had made his mark as a spokesman of the Muslims, and had emerged "not only as a

1. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
3. *Ibid.*, Appendix J, p. 41.

fluent native counterpoise to special Hindoo interests..., but further as a zealous advocate of well-considered Legislation".[1]

Nawab Abdul Latif's role in the Mahomedan Literary Society received official recognition on the occasion of the third annual *conversazione* in 1867, which was not only again attended by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, but also by Sir John Lawrence, the Viceroy of India. Lawrence was gratified by the "well-directed endeavours"[2] of the Society, and later sent him a set of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, with his autograph, and a gold medal as a token of appreciation for his services to Muslim progress in Bengal. The present was accompanied by a letter from the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, which, among other things lauded his services to Muslims and Government:

> "By founding the Mahomedan Literary Society (a society which now comprises nearly 500 members, and has become the parent of similar societies in other places), you have successfully led the Mahomedans, not only of Bengal, but of India generally, to look beyond the narrow bounds of their own system, and to explore those accumulated treasures of thought and feeling which are to be found embodied in the English language; while by your active and reasonable interposition on many occasions, you have led them to form a just conception of the policy of the Government, and to express their opinions freely, not only on questions of literary and scientific interest, but on those affecting their own social and political condition and the general welfare of the Country."[3]

The letter also appreciated his services in promoting a rapprochement between the Government and the Muslims, "and...so far as the present altered state of feeling is owing to your active and liberal exertions, to the judicious exercise of your influence, and to the force of your example, the Lieutenant-Governor considers you entitled to the gratitude of your countrymen and the cordial acknowledgments of the Government."[4]

In 1870, he was re-nominated to the Bengal Legislative Council. It was a difficult time, for there was a lot of commotion due to the suppression of the Wahhabis and their consequent trials. Some of the Wahhabi leaders, like Maulvi Yahya Ali of Sadiqpur, displayed such fortitude and dignity in the face of draconian punishments[5] that the Muslim masses

1. "The Company and the Crown," cited in *SAMPL*, Appendix H, pp. 39-40.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
3. S. C. Bayley, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Moulvie Abdool Luteef, Khan Bahadoor, 23 April 1867, *Ibid.*, p. 21.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.
5. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, pp. 121.

began to look upon them as martyrs. Muslims were thus once again agitated by the dilemma of whether India was a *Dar-ul-Islam* in the Islamic juristic sense or not. This Muslim unrest caused serious concern to the Government, which was eager to contain the Wahhabi influence and to soothe the ruffled feelings of Muslims. Nawab Abdul Latif took the lead in countering the Wahhabi influence, and reinforcing Muslim confidence in the Government.[1] The loyal endeavours of the Mahomedan Literary Society and its leader were appreciated by the Viceroy, Lord Minto who granted an interview to Nawab Abdul Latif. During his interview, Nawab Abdul Latif drew the Viceroy's attention to "the deplorable condition of the Mahomedans of India, and the inadequacy of the measures adopted by the Government for their education." Later, he submitted several papers pertaining to Muslim education.[2] Minto, who was already seized of the problem, and was perhaps influenced by the views of Hunter and O'Kinealy, gave thought to the question of Muslim education, and issued a Resolution on that subject on 7 August 1871. It would be unrealistic to attribute this Resolution of the Government of India directly to the influence of Nawab Abdul Latif; but the circumstances and provisions of the Resolution reveal traces of his persuasion. The Governor General in Council concluded from the official statistics "that in no part of the country, except perhaps the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab, do the Mahomedans adequately, or in proportion to the rest of the community, avail themselves of the educational advantage that the Government offers." The Governor General in Council also expressed regret that "so large and important a class"[3] possessing traditions of great scholarship and culture "should stand aloof from active cooperation with our Educational system, and should lose the advantages, both material and social, which others enjoy."[4] Local Governments were advised that secondary and higher education imparted through the Vernacular medium should be "rendered more accessible than now," and it was recommended that a more systematic encouragement and recognition of Arabic and Persian literature would not only be more acceptable to the Mohammedan Community, but would enlist the sympathies of the more earnest and enlightened of its members on the side of education." The Resolution also recommended the appointment of qualified Muslims as English teachers in Muslim areas, and that Muslims should be given

1. For a fuller discussion see Chapter I.
2. *SAPEM*, p. 239.
3. *The Proceedings of the Government of India in the Home Department* (Education)-No. 300, dated Simla, 7 August 1871, cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41.
4. *Ibid.*

grants-in-aid to enable them to establish their own schools. It was sent to Local Governments and universities, soliciting their views on how best the recommendations of the Governor General in Council could be implemented "without infringing the fundamental principles of our Educational System." The change in official attitude towards Muslims brought about by the Resolution was a source of gratification for Nawab Abdul Latif.[1] Indeed, the Resolution was "an important document, being the first of a series of measures adopted by the Government for the encouragement of education among the Mahomedans."[2] In this context, Nawab Abdul Latif's achievement was not just educational, but also symbolized a political gain in as much as it awakened the Government to a sense of responsibility for Muslim progress. Later, the Central National Mahomedan Association's efforts leading to the Resolution of 1885 followed a similar course.

In acknowledgment of his work in the Legislative Council, Nawab Abdul Latif, was nominated to its membership for the third time in 1872; and, on that occasion, Sir George Campbell wrote to him: "I don't think the Mahomedan Community could be better represented in the Legislative Council than by yourself."[3] During this third term, he devoted himself to the passage of a Bill regarding "the Voluntary Registration of Mahomedan Marriages and Divorces,"[4] which had become necessary since the abolition of the office of the Qazis, who used to be responsible for their registration. The qazis were gradually stripped of their judicial functions, as a result of legislation from 1793 to 1827. But though the qazis had been deprived of their official recognition, most Muslims of Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Bombay and Madras still availed themselves of their services in such extra-judicial affairs as solemnizing marriages and settling divorce disputes.[5] They also presided over several religious rites, and acted as religious and social guides of the Muslim community in those provinces. The Government decided, by the Act XI of 1864, to discontinue the appointment of qazis, as it was considered impolitic to appoint officials who were recognized, but not paid, for the conduct of Muslim religious affairs. The abolition of the qazis was both unfortunate and ill-timed. It caused acute hardship for the qazis, who lost their employment and failed to find any gainful use for their learning in classical disciplines and Islamic jurisprudence. Since the qazis were held in esteem in Muslim

1. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
2. Syed Mahmood, *History of English Education in India 1781 to 1893*, Aligarh 1895, p. 148, IOL.
3. *SAMPL*, p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

society, their dismissal from office, and their resultant poverty, rekindled Muslim doubts about British intentions towards Muslim culture and tradition. As long the qazis, however ineffective, were maintained in office, the Government could at least put up a pretence that India was a *Dar-ul-Islam.* But the abolition of the qazis put an end to this legal sham.

Nawab Abdul Latif again took the lead in making a representation to the Government on the hardships experienced as a result of the abolition of the qazis. He sought to enlist support in influential circles, and in 1868, read a paper on the "Mahomedan Law of Marriage and Dower" under the auspices of the Bengal Social Science Association. His paper served the purpose of bringing "to the notice of the Government the necessity of reappointing qazis in all the districts of Bengal."[1] That was not enough. He kept on pressing the problem on the attention of the authorities, till at last he succeeded in persuading Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to grant him permission to move a Bill[2] for the voluntary registration of Muslim marriages and divorces. The Select Committee of the Bengal Legislative Council "had to rely mainly"[3] on his knowledge and advice regarding this Bill, which implied the appointment of qazis as registrars of marriages and divorces. The Bill met with partial success, its provisions being applied in the Muslim majority districts of Lower Bengal. But even that limited application proved very beneficial for the local Muslims. Nawab Abdul Latif thus set in motion a movement for the appointment of qazis in other parts of India. The Muslims of Murshidabad presented a memorial[4] to the Lieutenant-Governor for extension of the operation of the newly passed Bill to their district as well. They complained that the minority provinces felt much handicapped in the performance of religious rites and ceremonies due to the absence of qazis. The Muslims of Madras made several representations to the Government to reinstitute the qazis.[5] The Muslims of the North-Western Provinces put forward a proposal for their reappointment.[6] *Oudh Akhbar* urged the Government to appoint the qazis for the whole of India.[7] By 1875, the demand for the reinstitution of the qazis system had gained wide currency, as a result of the

1. *SAPEM*, p. 277.
2. *SAMPL*, p. 7.
3. *Legislative Proceedings, Government of India. 2 January 1875*, Vol. 719, 1876, IOL.
4. *Patrikar*, 4 May 1877, cited in *BNNR*, 1877.
5. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 282.
6. *AIG*, 19 March 1875.
7. Cited in *Ibid.*, 21 May 1875.

initiative of Nawab Abdul Latif. *The Aligarh Institute Gazette* emphasized that, without the appointment of qazis, the registrations of marriages and divorces would remain nominal and irregular.[1] At that time, the question of the appointment of qazis came up before the Sunni and Shia ulema, who held their meetings separately. It is noteworthy that Syed Ameer Ali acted as one of the Shia representatives.[2] Later, a joint meeting of the Sunni and Shia ulema was held on 3 February 1875; but they failed to reach a consensus on that issue. However, the Muslims of the Punjab endorsed the efforts for the passage of a Bill for the registration of marriages and divorces.[3] Sir Syed, supporting the demand for the registration of Muslim marriages and divorces, introduced a more comprehensive Bill, which proposed that Government should resume the practice of appointing qazis, and that Local Governments should be empowered to make similar enactments if Muslims of the concerned province desired the reinstatement of qazis. He also proposed that qazis should be first appointed in Madras, as the Muslims of that province had brought up their demand before the Government several times.[4] The Governor of Madras informed Ripon that the Muslims were "very anxious for passing the promised Act respecting the appointment of kazis."[5] And when the Bill was passed in 1880, he felt that "it will be much appreciated"[6] by the local Muslims. It is clear that the initiative that Nawab Abdul Latif took in 1872 to pioneer the Qazi Act in Bengal became the basis for country-wide Muslim activity on this ground.

The murder of officiating Chief Justice Norman of Calcutta by a Wahhabi zealot, on 20 September 1871, had overtones of a political vendetta, but the Mahomedan Literary Society managed to retain the Government's goodwill. Then, hardly had the dust of renewed suspicion about Muslims settled, when, on 8 February 1872, Lord Mayo, the Viceroy and Governor General of India, fell victim to the dagger of an assassin who also happened to be a Muslim. The Mahomedan Literary Society took pains to emphasize the culprit's individual guilt, and refuted all suggestions about a Muslim conspiracy.

Thereafter, it appears that the Mahomedan Literary Society remained inactive for some years, and, when it revived its activities in 1876, it evoked considerable criticism. *The Bombay Times* compared the Society "to the

1. *Ibid.*, 19 February 1875.
2. *Ibid.*, 5 March 1875.
3. *Akhbar Anjuman-i-Punjab*, 8 October 1875, IOL.
4. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 283.
5. Buckingham to Ripon, 8 June 1880, *Correspondence in India, RC.*, BM.
6. Buckingham to Ripon, 2 August 1880, *Ibid.*

mythical bird '*anka*' which brings into being its young ones without eggs."[1] *Urdu Guide*[1] took exception to the political role of the Society.

> "How is it that the members of a society professing to be a literary institution come to put themselves forward whether individually or collectively, as politically representing any section of the Mahomedan Community."[2]

While *Urdu Guide* berated the Society for its political activities, *The Bombay Times* described it as an unknown body that was patronized by those "Mahomedan gentlemen who have an *entree* to the durbars."[3] The paper urged an inquiry into the membership and financial resources of the Society. The adverse criticism, though quite confused and unmerited, did in a way reflect the importance of the Society; otherwise, its detractors should not have taken pains to assail it from so many quarters. And the widespread high esteem that Nawab Abdul Latif enjoyed was once again demonstrated when, in 1876, he was appointed a District Magistrate and a Hindu paper commented that "no better selection" could have been made.[4]

After 1876, the Society progressively assumed a political role and made valuable contributions to shaping Muslim public opinion in Bengal. On behalf of the Society, Nawab Abdul Latif, read an address in a durbar to convey its congratulations to the Queen on her assumption of the title of Empress of India; and in this highlighted the role of the Society as a representative body of the Muslims which presented their views and feelings to the Government.[5] It is interesting to note that Khan Bahadur Barkat Ali Khan of Lahore also associated himself with this address. However, it was the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war that brought the Society into political limelight. The Muslims of the subcontinent identified themselves with their Turkish brethren, and their sympathy was heightened by the fact that Turkey was the victim of Russian aggression. The Muslims were not happy with British neutrality in the Russo-Turkish war; since they had expected Britain to stand by Turkey as she had done during the Crimean war. They felt that Britain had let down Turkey. The Government of India tried to justify the Conservative policy of neutrality with the argument that British imperial interests preceded British obligations to the Muslims of India. But the Government could hardly find any apology for

1. Cited in *Urdu Guide*, 12 February 1876, BM.
2. *Urdu Guide*, 12 February 1876.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Sanbad Bhaskar*, 31 July 1876, cited in *BNNR*, 1876, IOL.
5. *Akhbar Anjuman-i-Punjab*, January 1877, Vol. 8, No. 41, PUL.

the Christian fanaticism of Gladstone, who was then advocating the expulsion of the Turks "bag and baggage" from that part of Europe which they had "desolated and profaned".[1] The speeches of Gladstone and Northbrook antagonized the Muslims of India and turned their sentiments against the British. The upsurge of Muslim sympathy was not a welcome prospect for the Government of India, which feared that the Sultan might make a direct appeal for *Jihad* to the Muslims of the subcontinent; and in that situation "our whole Mahomedan population would (however, reluctantly) obey the mandate"[2] of the Commander of the Faithful. The Muslims expressed their resentment against Russia and their Liberal sympathisers in England through meetings organized in Bombay, Peshawar and Calcutta.[3] Though the Muslims voiced their appreciation for the Conservative stance against the Liberal's hostility to Turkey, they were still restive to do more than was permitted by the Government. The Muslims of Bengal began "to evince great anxiety about the difficulties of the Sultan;"[4] and the excitement among the Muslims of Bengal and Bombay attracted the attention of Government. Lytton entertained apprehensions about the spread of this excitement among "the Mahomedan States on our frontiers." He conveyed his anxiety to the Queen, and informed her that, if "Your Majesty's Government should be forced into a policy of prominent aggression upon Turkey, I am inclined to think that a Mahomedan rising in India is among the contingencies we may have to face." He was confident that the Government of India could crush any Muslim rising "speedily and effectively," but felt that such an uprising could still be a source of danger to the Empire.[5] Under the circumstances, the Government thought it expedient to countenance the outbursts of Muslim sentiment for Turkey, and sought to canalize it into an anti-Russian campaign. This was not difficult, since the policy had the two-fold advantage of allowing expression to the Muslim feelings, which, if pent up, could have flown into dangerous channels, and of drowning Muslim suspicions of British intentions in an anti-Russian propaganda. Availing himself of the scope for political activity provided by this policy, Nawab Abdul Latif took steps to promote the best interests of the Government while seeking to turn verbal expressions of Muslim

1. A. J. Grant and H. Temperley, *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London 1931, p. 299.

2. Lytton to Beaconsfield, 18 September 1876, *Letters Despatched, LTC, Eur.* 218/1/1, IOL.

3. Lytton to Disraeli, 3 October 1876, *Ibid.*

4. Lytton to Salisbury, 18 September 1876, *Ibid.*

5. Lytton to the Queen, 4 October 1876, *Letter to the Queen, LTC.*

sympathy into positive help for the Turks. He asked for permission to hold a public meeting of the Muslims of Calcutta.[1] He was granted permission after some correspondence; and the meeting was held in the Town Hall on 7 October 1876, which was attended by 600 Muslim gentlemen. Nawab Abdul Latif explained, in simple Urdu the internal troubles of Turkey, and described the new complications of the Turkish position in the Balkans. He highlighted the Anglo-Turkish friendship, "and every fact was brought out to strengthen this point."[2] He appealed to the audience to make liberal donations for the wounded Turkish soldiers and for the families of those killed in the fighting. He criticized an Urdu newspaper of Madras for urging Muslims of India to collect subscriptions for a *jihad* and to help the Turks in their holy war. Nawab Abdul Latif argued that any declaration of *jihad* by the Sultan was inapplicable to the Muslims of India, as they were not his subjects, but were living in peace under British protection.[3] This position was taken up not only by Nawab Abdul Latif, but also by Sir Syed, who was more vehement in his condemnation of those Muslims who advocated ideas of religious obligation to the Sultan, and support for his *jihad* against European powers. Several Muslim associations followed the lead of Nawab Abdul Latif, and organized meetings to express their sympathy for the Turks while demonstrating their loyalty for the British Crown. The meeting of the Mahomedan Literary Society came in for a lot of gratuitous criticism from *Urdu Guide*, which took exception to Nawab Abdul Latif's remarks about the maladministration of Sultan Abdul Aziz and Sultan Murad. The paper alleged that these remarks were "distasteful to the Mahomedan Community,who ignored the proceedings," adding that "He who hates the Sultan hates God."[5] Dissident elements, mostly Shias, held their own meeting at the residence of Nawab Amir Ali Khan, a prominent Shia leader, and "declared the proceedings of Town Hall meeting null and void."[6] It is significant that the Shias identified themselves with the cause of the Turkish caliphate for the sake of a larger Muslim solidarity, and their reason for dissatisfaction with Nawab Abdul Latif seems to be, that he, being a Sunni, had not done enough for the Sultan. Perhaps it was a manoeuvre of his political rivals to discredit him in the eyes of his Sunni supporters.

1. *The Englishman*, 9 October 1876, cited in *SAMPL*, Appendix K, pp. 42-4.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Maqalat*, vol. xiii, *op. cit.*, p. 439.
5. *Urdu Guide*, 14 October 1876.
6. *Ibid.*, 21 October 1876.

Later the dissident elements coalesced into the Central National Mahomedan Association. But Nawab Abdul Latif was gratified to find that his own movement was followed by Mahommedans in other parts of India. And despite the adverse dissident criticism in India, the Sultan recognized Nawab Abdul Latif's services to the Turkish cause, and as a mark of his appreciation conferred the Order of Medjidie upon him.[1]

In 1882, the Mahomedan Literary Society, presenting an address to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, invited his attention to the Muslim backwardness in education. In response, the Lieutenant-Governor advised them that education was a primary responsibility of the Muslims themselves, and said that he was glad the Muslims had conveyed their views to the Education Commission.[2] Soon after this, Nawab Abdul Latif launched a campaign for the promotion of education among Muslims. He undertook a tour of Bihar, addressing public meetings in several towns and explaining his "eminently practical" views on education in simple Urdu.[3] He also wrote a detailed reply to the questions put to him by the Education Commission, highlighting his differences with the views of the Central National Mahomedan Association.[4] In December 1883, Blunt brought him a letter of introduction from Syed Jamal-ud-Din Afghani,[5] and discussed religious and political affairs of Indian Muslims with him. Nawab Abdul Latif invited Blunt to a meeting of the Mahomedan Literary Society, where the latter expounded his scheme for a Muslim university. Blunt's scheme was well-received, and Nawab Abdul Latif assured him of all sympathy and help,[6] although, later, he was not able to carry forward the idea. In December 1884, he represented the Muslim community in a meeting held in the Town Hall, to bid farewell and to "express respect and veneration"[7] for Lord Ripon, indicating his identification with the liberal forces generated by Lord Ripon. This meeting was also addressed by Surendranath Banerjea, and was nothing short of a representative meeting of the major communities of India.[8]

When Nawab Abdul Latif retired from Government service, in 1885, the press resounded with acclaim for his achievements, pointing out that

1. *SAMPL*, p. 31.
2. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 8 May 1882, IOL.
3. *Reis and Rayyat*, 27 October 1883, BM.
4. For a fuller discussion see Chapter V.
5. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 126 and p. 138.
7. *Bengalee*, 20 December 1884, IOL.
8. *Ibid.*, 13 December 1884, IOL.

he should be "given the credit which belongs to a pioneer."[1] In January 1886, he was appointed the *Dewan* of Bhopal State, and it was expected that he would be able to persuade the Government not to proceed against the ruling Begum of Bhopal's husband, Nawab Siddiq Hassan Khan,[2] an eminent scholar who was disliked by the Government for his Wahhabi affiliations. But soon after his appointment, differences arose between him and the Begum, who then pressed the Government to appoint an Englishman as her *Dewan*.[3] The press defended the appointment of Nawab Abdul Latif, and emphasized the need for having an Indian as the *Dewan* of the State.[4] Nawab Abdul Latif had "begun to introduce reforms, but finding that he would not consent to be her husband's humble tool and instrument, Her Highness took a violent dislike to him, and came to Calcutta to beg that he might be dismissed and an Englishman nominated in his place."[5] Under these conditions, the Nawab left Bhopal "with a reputation, not only unimpaired, but increased by the occurrence of the last few months."[6]

His retirement from public service enabled him to devote greater time and attention to the Mahomedan Literary Society, which again emerged as an influential political body when, in December 1886, it refused to join the Indian National Congress.[7] He informed the members of the Reception Committee of the National Congress that the Mahomedan Literary Society did not consider "that the moment is opportune for forcing any particular views on the notice of the Government;" that its experience of the last 25 years, had shown that the Society's representations "in the interest of their co-religionists" had been receiving "careful attention" from the Government; and that the Society preferred to "adhere to this legitimate and hitherto successful mode of procedure in any future matter in which they may consider it necessary to take action, whether on their own initiation, or conjointly with other associations."[8] Clearly, the Mahomedan Literary Society was not willing to renounce its initiative

1. *The Indian Daily News*, 15 January 1885, IOL.
2. *Riaz-ul-Akhbar*, 31 January 1886, PUL.
3. *Rahbar-i-Hind*, 21 January 1886, PUL.
4. *Ibid.*, 28 January 1886, PUL.
5. Dufferin to Kimberley, 10 April 1886, Letters to the Secretary of State, *Dufferin Papers*, Microfilm, IOL.
6. Lepel Griffin, Agent to the Governor General in Central India, to Nawab Abdool Luteef Khan, 5 June 1886, cited in *SAMPL*, p. 32.
7. *The Calcutta Review*, July 1889, General Notices, ix to xi. See also *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 29 December 1886, IOL.
8. *Ibid.*

in Muslim political affairs. In 1888, he wrote a letter to the Government of Bengal, opposing the preparation of text-books on the basis of "natural religion", that militated against Islam as a revealed religion. He also suggested that for the promotion of religious education the Mohsin Trust funds should be used to pay the salaries of Muslim religious teachers.[1] In 1890, under his guidance, the Mahomedan Literary Society sent a memorial to the Secretary of State for India rejecting the elective principle in the Indian Councils Bill, and pleaded that such a provision would put 50 million Muslims "at the mercy of a strong compact Hindu majority."[2]

Nawab Abdul Latif's death in 1893 marked the end of an era in the Muslim politics of Bengal; for soon after this, the Mahomedan Literary Society lost its pre-eminent role in Muslim educational and political affairs. The Society, however, stands as a landmark in the history of Muslim regeneration, and its work has been aptly epitomized by its founder:

> "The establishment of the Mahomedan Literary Society the *first* Mahomedan Institution of its kind for all India, has been, in gradual course of time, productive of great internal as well as external benefits."[3]

Nawab Abdul Latif's death left the Muslims of Bengal almost leaderless since Ameer Ali had also retired from politics, Prince Mirza Jahan Qadar, presiding over a meeting of the Mahomedan Literary Society after his death remarked:

> The Society owed its existence chiefly to the remarkable industry and clear foresightedness of one whose life was a long record of good work done in elevating the social and political status of his co-religionists.[4]

1. *The Englishman*, 31 October 1888, IOL.

2. *Public and General Letters from India and Bengal, L/P & J/3*, 1890, vol. 12, IOL. For a fuller discussion of his role in the struggle for Separate Muslim Representation see Chapter VIII.

3. *QCML*, p. 155.

4. *The Englishman*, 5 August 1893, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 304.

CHAPTER IV

SYED AMEER ALI AND THE CENTRAL NATIONAL MAHOMEDAN ASSOCIATION

Though the Central National Mahomedan Association developed into a country-wide body, it was essentially a product of Muslim politics of Bengal; and its rationale is best understood in the context of Bengal which was in a state of ferment in 1876. Political discontent was more marked in Bengal than anywhere else in the subcontinent, and the year 1876 saw the beginning of a conflict between Tory imperialism and Hindu bourgeoisie. The Muslims found themselves face to face with these challenges, and their political response was accordingly conditioned by these factors which also formed the background of the rise and growth of the Association.

Lytton symbolized the imperialist spirit that pervaded the Conservative Party, reversing the policies which "had extended to Indians some blessings of Liberalism."[1] In 1876, the Government reduced the age limit of candidates for the Indian Civil Service examinations from twenty one years to nineteen years, and discontinued holding of Civil Service examinations in India. Together these measures deliberately imposed conditions that practically excluded Indian candidates from entry into the Civil Service. Lytton stated that "the reduction of the standard of age for competitive examinations will practically render the competition of Natives educated in their own country a matter of exceptional difficulty."[2] Reversing the policy of his predecessor, Lytton decided to repress those Indian newspapers which were generally considered inimical to British imperial interests. Meanwhile, the Russo-Turkish War was creating an

1. R. J. Moore, *Liberalism in Indian Politics*, London 1966, p. 19.

2. Lytton to Secretary of State, 2 May 1878, "Minute of the Viceroy, 10 September 1884, Correspondence relating to the age at which candidates for Civil Service of India are admitted for competition in England," *Parliamentary Papers, 1885,* (C. 4580), Vol. 58, p. 29, BM.

acute awareness of real British intentions towards Turkey and it was an unpardonable affront in the eyes of Lytton. He confided to Salisbury: "Our Mahomedans in Bengal are beginning to evince great anxiety about the difficulties of the Sultan."[1] Writing to the Queen about the disloyal tone of the Indian press he complained:

> "They denounce the whole English race as cruel and cowardly; they denounce the English Government as weak and wicked, and they call upon the Natives of India to recognize their own strength, and the shame of being still ruled by a power so weak that it must fall whenever they rise against it."[2]

Fearing that the ignorant masses might be excited against the Government, he felt that the situation called for "the application of some strong means of repression."[3] Accordingly, the Vernacular Press Act severely restricted the freedom of newspapers published in Oriental languages, but exempted the English press. The Arms Act legalized discrimination against the Indians in the matter of carrying arms. These Acts betrayed an utter lack of confidence of both Hindus and Muslims. In its guilty conscience, the Government entertained apprehensions of a Muslim reaction in face of unprovoked British aggression on Afghanistan. But even these exaggerated fears in no way justified these enactments which further deepened the feelings of disaffection among the Indian people at large.

In the meantime a devastating famine was stalking through Bengal, Bombay and Madras.[4] The prices of rice, the staple food, soared beyond the reach of millions in Bengal.[5] Florence Nightingale visited the famine-stricken areas, and the suffering she saw was too deep for words.

> Between five and six million have perished in this Madras famine. These are figures, paper and print to us.[6]

She lamented the "grinding chronic semi-starvation of everyday" in many places which were not affected by famine. Even the prices of salt were too high for the poor who subsisted on meagre food.[7] In face of this misery, the Government did not relent its monopoly of salt manufacture,[8]

1. Lytton to Salisbury, 18 September 1876, *Letters Despatched*, *LTC*, IOL.
2. Lytton to the Queen Empress, 21 March 1878, *Ibid.*
3. *Parliamentary Papers*, *1878*, (C. 2040), p. 6, BM.
4. *Grambarta Parkashika*, 7 July 1887, *BNNR*, 1887, IOL.
5. *Samachar*, 13 August 1887, *Ibid.*
6. Florence Nightingale, "The People of India", *The Nineteenth Century*, August 1878, p. 195, BM.
7. *Ibid.*
8. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

and the oppression thus caused was reminiscent of the brutal medieval methods applied for the enforcement of *gabelle* in pre-Revolutionary France. Typically following the traditions of the Bourbon court of Louis XVI, Lytton neither cared for the rampant famine nor for the deeply aggrieved Indian public opinion but staged the pageant of a *durbar* to proclaim the assumption of the title of Empress of India by the Queen. Mounting financial difficulties after the famine did not deter Lytton from committing the scarce revenues of India to an aggressive war against Afghanistan. To add to the financial confusion he abolished import duties on English coarse cotton cloth. The Indian Exchequer lost revenues and the Indian textile manufacturers were exposed to unfair competition by Manchester. In 1879, exemption for English textile goods was extended on the plea that it suited "the best interests of India"[1] to abolish cotton duties. Political subjection and economic exploitation of India touched its highest watermark under Lytton.

Hindus reacted to the policies of Lytton more sharply as they were more deeply affected by them. Even among Hindus, the Bengalis were the first to take up the challenge of Lytton's policies. They were passing through a religious revival matched by a zeal for English education and political consciousness. Educational progress and political awareness developed apace as complementary forces and overall achievement in these fields was amply reflected in the Hindu press. In 1876-1877, there were 213 newspapers in English and European languages, and 350 in the Vernacular and Oriental languages,[2] and most of them were the product of Hindu enterprise. Bengali Hindu newspapers and journals were in the vanguard of political agitation against Lytton, and commanded considerable circulation among Hindu bourgeoisie whose economic interests they served. In most cases, ideas of Western Liberalism were skilfully combined with fervent Hindu Revivalism which formed together the conceptual framework of Hindu nationalism. Hindus were not only the largest community, but they also possessed wealth and education to take political advantage of their numerical strength. An English educated elite, deeply imbued with feelings of Hinduism emerged on the socio-economic and political scene. In Bengal, the landlords who were mostly Hindus extorted high rents from predominantly Muslim tenantry despite the "systematic resistance"[3] by the latter during Pubna and Bogra riots in 1872. The *banias* plied their Shylockian trade throughout the country but in particular had wrought

1. Lytton to Cranbrook, 12 May 1879, *LTC.*
2. *Parliamentary Papers J & P, 1878,* Vol. 57, pp. 96-97, IOL.
3. H. H. Dowell, *The Cambridge History of India,* Vol. VI, p. 249.

great havoc to the hapless peasantry of Bengal. Half-starved, broken by need, illiterate peasants put their thumb marks on documents which spelt their ruin and ultimately deprived them of their lands. Money lending, an easy source of Hindu prosperity became for the underprivileged peasant a problem which "overshadowed all![1] As the educated Hindus held a monopoly of public offices, it gave them considerable political leverage. Having profited as middlemen in English commercial establishments, the Hindu merchants had set up their own business on modern lines. Now they had discovered new avenues of prosperity in textile industry. The rise of Hindu capitalism stood in sharp contrast with agrarian Muslim society, and added a new dimension to the Hindu-Muslim conflict.

Hindu economic strength was matched by their capacity for political action. The Hindu businessmen and industrialists began to think in terms of political power in order to have their say in the economic policies of the Government. But Lytton's policies ran counter to their ambitions. It was in Hindu self-interest to oppose policies which sought to restrict the areas of their economic opportunity. And, if this could be patriotism as well, so much the better for them. Hindu capitalist and elite pooled together resources of wealth and intellect to oppose restrictions on Civil Service and denounce the abolition of cotton duties. Virulent propaganda campaign of the Hindu press revealed how deeply the Hindus felt perturbed over Lytton's policies. *Raj Shahi Samachar* lamented that the cotton mills of Bombay would be closed down as a result of abolition of import duties on cotton cloth and competition with the textile manufacturers of Manchester.[2] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* claimed that the Indian mills were "sufficient to clothe the people of India"[3] and urged them to patronise the products of Indian textile mills. *Bharat Mihr* concluded that "the competition with Manchester has indeed roused us from our sleep."[4] These feelings were shared by Hindus of other provinces, and as a community they were determined to defend their economic interests.

By 1876, Bengali Hindus were gravitating towards independent political activity and Surendranath Banerjea took the lead in protesting against the reduction of age limit for the Indian Civil Service examinations. Although his unmerited rejection from the Indian Civil Service gave an air of injured pride to his protest, he displayed a constructive vision to launch a countrywise movement based on sound political principles. He

1. Florence Nightingale, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
2. *Raj Shahi Samachar*, 11 February 1876, *BNNR, 1876*, IOL.
3. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 16 March 1876, *Ibid.*
4. *Bharat Mihr*, 13 April 1876, *Ibid.*

organized the Indian Association, on 26 July 1876, with the object of creating a strong public opinion, and uniting different Indian communities "upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations."[1] By his indefatigable efforts he made the Indian Association into a powerful force which "soon focussed the public spirit of the middle class and became the centre of the leading representatives of the educated community of Bengal."[2] He toured the N. W. Provinces and the Punjab, and visited Lahore, Amritsar and Multan. According to a contemporary newspaper his tour was significant: firstly, the people of Upper India regarded the Bengalis as their elder brethren, secondly, it was not difficult to bring about unanimity between different races of India, and thirdly India hitherto the scene of religious agitation now offered a good field for the working of political principles.[3] Cotton eulogised his tour as a "triumphal march", and averred that "the Bengalee Baboos now rule public opinion from Peshawar to Chittagong."[4] Such an extension of Bengali political influence could not have been imagined some years earlier. The Association succeeded in canalizing the Hindu discontent against the Government and emboldened them to demand participation in the government as the only way for remedying their grievances. *Hindu Rajika* asked for "some form of representative government" for the people of India and criticised the British for applying a different policy to India than the one followed in other British colonies.[5] *Samachar* raised a more fundamental question about the competence of the British Parliament to tax India.[6] An unrepresentative Indian Legislative Council was acceptable to the Hindu elite than the unrepresentative British Parliament, for they hoped to control the former institution through political action. Obviously the Hindus were steadily moving towards the politics of "No Taxation without Representation". If I may take the liberty of coining a phrase, Bengali Hindus were poised for a political take off.

The inter-play of Liberal and Conservative policies had sharpened the political awareness among the Indian elite who were predominantly a Hindu group. Although Lytton suppressed all vestiges of political activity, his imperious policies had the unwanted effect of dragging Indian problems and policies into the arena of British politics. In a forceful campaign, Gladstone exposed the oppressive Tory policies in India, and

1. Surendranath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Bharat Sangskarak*, 16 July 1877, *BNNR*, 1877.
4. Cotton, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.
5. *Hindu Rajika*, 20 December 1876, *BNNR*, 1876.
6. *Samachar*, 9 July 1877, *BNNR*, 1877.

criticised the Royal Titles Bill as a retrograde step.[1] He censured Lytton's government for their failure to extend to the Indians "the blessings and benefits of free institutions."[2] In 1877, he expounded the aims of British policy in India which reflected the spirit of contemporary Liberalism. He wrote:

> Our title to be there depends upon a first condition, that our being there is profitable to the Indian nations; and on a second condition, that we can make them see and understand it to be profitable.[3]

In March 1878, he denounced the Vernacular Press Act as undermining "a fundamental branch of the law relating to the liberty and general conditions of the country."[4] Urging a parliamentary inquiry into the Indian constitution, he castigated the Tories for having wasted Indian finances in an unjust war against Afghanistan instead of bringing about useful improvements for the welfare of India. Such a policy, he feared, would create "deep sense of wrong and resentment" among the people of the subcontinent. He exposed the discriminatory economic policies of Tories who were protectionists at home, but followed free trade policies with regard to India, and thus put up "an invidious, almost odious picture of inequality...to the millions of India."[5] As the financial problem of India was directly related with material and moral progress, Gladstone envisaged a new deal for the Indian peoples in consonance with the imperial interests.

Liberalism found an echo in India, and a section of English officials began to evince greater interest in Indian political aspirations. It served the best Hindu political aims to cooperate with the Liberals who sought to carry with them the vast Hindu majority as the best guarantee for the solidarity of British rule in India. Similarly an alliance between the British and Hindu capitalists and industrialists, despite their apparent hostility, bound them together in their exploitation of the have-nots. In this atmosphere, many Hindu leaders and intellectuals established their rapport with Liberal English officials like Cotton, Hume, and Wedderburn who showed them the way of organized political action. Exhilarated by a feeling of confidence for having forged an alliance with an articulate Liberal group in England, they emerged as a prominent factor in Indian

1. R. J. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
2. *Hansard*, ccxxvii, 9 March 1876, col. 1774, BM.
3. Gladstone, "Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East" *The Nineteenth Century*, *1877*, pp. 10-11.
4. *Hansard*, ccxxxviii, 19 March 1878, col. 1601, BM.
5. *Hansard*, ccxlii, 23 July 1878, BM.

politics. After all, Liberalism even with its imperial commitment was more beneficial for them than the Tory reaction. Lytton's endeavours to halt the process of political activity had the opposite effect of heightening the tempo of political unrest as a reaction to his repressive policies. By 1876, the Liberal propaganda had gradually built up an atmosphere of political expectation and aspiration among the Hindu bourgeoisie in general and of Bengal in particular.

Where did the Muslims stand in that fast changing political milieu? How far could they identify themselves with the Hindu economic and political aims? Although they had sympathised with the Civil Service Agitation it did not truly represent Muslim interests as they did not stand on the same educational and economic footing with the Hindus to make it a Muslim political issue. In the year 1878-1879, of the 4,183 candidates who took the various examinations of the Calcutta University, only 1,585 passed and of these successful candidates 1,355 were Hindus, 97 Muslims, 80 Christians, and 50 belonged to other religious communities.[1] How could all the successful Muslim candidates compete for the exceptionally difficult Indian Civil Service examination when the overall number of Indian competitors was exceedingly small in comparison with the overwhelming majority of English candidates. In 1870, of the 332 candidates, only 7 were Indians, and only one was successful; and in 1880, of 182 competitors only 2 Indians appeared but none qualified.[2] Under the circumstances, the Civil Service Agitation was a matter of peripheral interest for the Muslims.

Politically unorganized Muslims could not stand up against the ruthless exploitation by the Hindu bourgeoisie. Millions of poor Muslims were as powerless in the political field as they were helpless in the economic sphere. In Bengal, even the law did not help the tenants, largely Muslims, who enjoyed no rights as those conferred on the zemindars.[3] Muslim peasants were the worst sufferers in the commercial competition between Manchester and Calcutta. They were primarily interested in cheaper cloth, even if imported, but were denied this by the Hindu industrialists who felt threatened by the abolition of cotton duties. The situation was further aggravated as educated Muslims were often denied entry into public service by the ever-vigilant combines of Hindu employees in the Government departments.[4] Hindu-Muslim political and economic

1. "Statement exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during the year 1878-79", *Parliamentary Papers, 1880*, (402), Vol. 53, p. 97, BM.

2. Dowell, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

3. *Saptahik Samachar*, 9 May 1876, cited in *BNNR, 1876*.

4. "The Present Economical Condition of the Musalmans of Bengal," *AIG*, 27 November 1877.

differences represented the type of conflict as divided the industrialised states of the North and the agricultural states of the South before the American Civil War. Uneducated and underprivileged Muslim, in his "struggle for existence"[1] was pitted against the educated and privileged Hindu.

No doubt the Muslim grievances were mainly economic but they could only be redressed through political means. Herein lay the rationale of a Muslim political organization specially for Muslim Bengal. Since the religious sensibility of the Muslims was more developed than their awareness of political and economic problems, they gathered on the platform of Muslim nationalism for remedying their economic situation. This was done by the Faraizis and, during the years, the pattern of protest had not changed much. Muslims were more likely to give adherence to a political organization of their own co-religionists, rather than to a political organization dominated by their Hindu exploiters. The Muslims of Bengal were in search of a political future. How could they evade fundamental questions in that state of inter-communal political and economic confrontation? Could they remain indifferent to the stirrings within their own community? Could they ignore the Hindu political agitation which was engulfing them from all sides? Could they neglect signs of change in Government policy towards the peoples of India? These were the questions which Muslim leadership had to answer. Muslim leaders not only of Bengal, but of other provinces as well, were charged with twofold responsibility of fostering progress through English education, and of giving a direction to Muslim politics *vis-a-vis* the Hindu politics and Government policies. Nawab Abdul Latif and Sir Syed insisted that English education was the pre-requisite for any political activity. How could they run before learning to walk, was their argument. So they preferred to insulate Muslims against any political activity or agitation which they apprehended was likely to deflect them from the path of education and loyalty. This policy was not inapplicable to Muslims in other parts of India. But the Muslims of Bengal were in an unenviable position. How could they sit back in time of crisis to await the tardy results of English education, and not organize themselves for political action. Long range remedies however beneficial were neither realistic nor practicable. Logic of circumstances warranted that they should have a political organization and leadership comparable with the Indian Association. Not surprising therefore, that the Mahomedan Literary Society with its record of outstanding educational service failed to meet the political

1. W. S. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

challenge. Similarly the educational campaign of Sir Syed which stirred Muslims of Northern India did not make any impression on the Bengali Muslims. Satisfactory explanation for Aligarh's failure to carry Bengali Muslims with them cannot be found in the oft-repeated allegation that Urdu was little understood in Bengal, but in Aligarh's indifference to the real problems of Bengali Muslims. In a way, the grievance of Bengali Muslims was not merely a local issue, but was symptomatic of the undercurrent of discontent pervading the Muslim society all over India. In 1878, the Muslims of Bengal were placed in the same predicament, which beset the entire Muslim nation on a larger scale after the partition of Bengal in 1905.

The Central National Mahomedan Association: Aims and Organization

Not satisfied with the purely educational policies of Nawab Abdul Latif, educated Muslim youth considered them too inadequate if not unrealistic. A controversy had sprung up between the youthful 'reformist'[1] group and the elder 'conservative'[2] element evoking considerable public interest. Ameer Ali, 29 years old successful barrister imbued with the spirit of English liberalism, gave the lead to a small but dynamic progressive group. As a lawyer and historian he took a more pragmatic view of Muslim political situation. At first he looked up to Sir Syed for guidance, and shared his anxieties with him, while the latter was in England in 1869-70:

> Both in England and in India I had frequent opportunities of discussing with Sir Syed Ahmad the position of the Muslims in the political economy of British India, and of their prospects in the future. Syed Ahmad Khan pinned his faith in English education and academical training. I admitted their importance but argued that unless as a Community their training ran on parallel lines with that of their Hindu compatriots they were certain to be submerged in the rising tide of new nationalism.[3]

It may be argued that Ameer Ali's account of his exchange of views with Sir Syed Ahmad, written in retrospect, years later, could be an after-thought to rationalize his policies. Such a surmise however, attractive is hardly valid, for in 1878 at the time of the establishment of the Central National Mahomedan Association his views found a more emphatic expression.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.
3. *Memoirs*, pp. 32-33.

Not satisfied with the level of Muslim political thinking, he thought that Muslims were also deficient in political initiative and needed an organisation to give a practical shape to their legitimate demands. Independent political activity was the *raison d'etre* of the Association.

> ...the absence of any means to represent to Government faithfully and honestly, the views of the Mussulmans of India, have placed them in a most disadvantageous position as regards political influence and power relatively to the other Indian Communities....The few Mahomedan societies which had been formed here and there, were, in the main literary and scientific, having for their ostensible object the promotion of a desire of European knowledge among the Mahomedans.[1]

The educational activities of Nawab Abdul Latif and Sir Syed however laudable were a poor substitute for political action. Another reason which weighed with the leaders of the Association was the need of fostering a feeling of national unity among the Muslims who were divided on sectarian and provincial lines. There was little inter-provincial understanding and co-operation, and they stood isolated from each other by their parochial outlook. The Muslims of Bengal were like 'a house divided against itself.'[2] The conditions were no better in other provinces.

> The factions and cliques into which the Mahomedan community was divided not only prevented their acting in concert with their Hindoo and Christian fellow subjects on general questions of public policy, but absolutely precluded the possibility of collective action in the way of social progress and reform.[3]

Sir Syed and Nawab Abdul Latif gave first priority to educational advancement and did not consider political action on a countrywide basis to be either feasible or beneficial for the Muslims. Ameer Ali sought to fill the gap in the political life of the Muslims, by organising 'the Central National Mahomedan Association' as a representative body of Muslim India. It was the first attempt to create a political consensus on problems common to all the Muslims of the subcontinent. The Association was a pioneer in this field and Ameer Ali was not unjustified in lauding its role:

> It may be safely affirmed that until the establishment of the Central National Mahommedan Association, there existed no political body among the Indian Mahommedans, capable of representing to the Government, from a loyal but independent stand-point, the hopes

1. *Quinquennial Report of Central National Mahomedan Association for 1878-1883*, Calcutta 1884, (Henceforth QCNMA), p. i., IOL.
2. *The Englishman*, 1st November 1873, IOL.
3. *CNMA*., p. ii.

> and aspirations, the legitimate wants and requirements of the large body of Moslems in this country, who by their number and homogeneity constitute such an important factor in all questions concerning the welfare of India.[1]

Muslim homogeneity could only be translated into national strength through political action. In promotion of Muslim nationalism lay the genesis of the Association.

Ameer Ali launched the Central National Mahomedan Association on 12 May 1878.[2] Prince Farrukh Shah who wielded considerable influence in official circles and among the Muslims of Calcutta became the president of the Association. Nawab Meer Mohammad Ali, an adviser of the ex-King of Oudh, and a Justice of Peace was chosen as vice-president.[3] They could use their influence to neutralize the hostility of Nawab Abdul Latif. Syed Ameer Ali, as founder and secretary of the Association embodied in his person the guiding spirit and directing force of the Association. Although he succeeded in winning the support of a large section of the Muslim gentry, he did not find it easy to hold together "different elements...with widely different mentalities".[4] Ameer Ali again appealed to Sir Syed "to give us his valuable support, but he declined."[5] He has not mentioned any reasons for Sir Syed's refusal which presumably was due to latter's opposition to the political nature of the Association.

As was customary, the Association also made a declaration of loyalty to the Crown, but it was free of the euphoric overtones that characterized Sir Syed's vows of loyalty, and of contemporary political and social bodies. They blandly affirmed that the Association was "founded essentially upon the principle of strict adherence to the British Crown".[6] Loyalty was considered to be in harmony with political progress. They maintained:

> It is also hoped that the Association may, by constituting a means for conveying and interpreting to the Government the wants, feelings and opinions of a considerable portion of Her Majesty's Indian subjects, prove in no small measure a useful auxiliary towards establishing upon a solid basis the permanent stability of beneficent rule in India.[7]

1. *Ibid.*, p. i.
2. Although the date of the establishment of the Association has been differently reported, the date given in official report of the Association is most authentic. *QCNMA*, p. 2.
3. *The Hindu Patriot*, 11 February 1878, IOL.
4. *Memoirs*, p. 43.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
6. *QCNMA*, p. iii.
7. *Ibid.*

This succinct statement of loyalty did not amount to any surrender of political volition. The Association was not formed to propagate any credo of loyalism, but for the prupose of "potection and conservation of the general interests" of the Muslims of India. It sought to obtain recognition from Government of 'their just and reasonable claims.' Achievement of rights could not be possible without an awareness of rights. The Association decided to achieve 'political regeneration of the Indian Mahomedans by a moral revival.' Both of these processes were considered as complementary. The guiding principle of moral renaissance was set forth as a combination of the 'progressive tendencies of the age', with the 'noble traditions of the past.'[1] In these ideas, the Association stood in agreement with Sir Syed and Nawab Abdul Latif. Muslim faith and culture were to be the main springs of inspiration in moral and political rediscovery of the Muslim nation. Ameer Ali was second to none in his contribution to Muslim intellectual awakening. It may be pointed out that so far as the moral regeneration was concerned, the Association could be considered as forming a part of a larger movement of Muslim cultural revival in the 19th century India.

But what was more, he wanted to make the Association into an instrument of Muslim political training and progress. Muslims should have a consciousness of their political rights and should be well organised to take their rightful place in the political set up of India.

> Social regeneration is hardly possible without political influence, and though your Committee perfectly understand, as they have had occasion to impress on their co-religionists, that the chief remedy lies in their hands, they cannot shut their eyes to the fact, that in order to enable a community to rise in the scale of civilisation, it is necessary to allow it a fair share of political influence and power.[2]

Ameer Ali could not afford to let his community to be outstripped in the political race. Political organisation could be the only response to the Hindu challenge, and protection against unfavourable changes in British policy. He sought to marshall the Muslims into an independent organization so that they could hold their own *vis-a-vis* the British Government and the Hindus.

> I felt that great changes were impending in the system of Government, and that unless the followers of Islam prepare themselves they would soon be outstripped in the political race by their Hindu fellow countrymen.[3]

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
3. *Memoirs*, p. 43.

The Association urged the Muslims not to keep aloof from the political competition as advised by Sir Syed Ahmad and Nawab Abdul Latif, but to take their due place in it.

The Association defined its political methods as 'loyal but independent.' It sought to use 'all legitimate and constitutional means,' and appreciated the value of 'collective action'[1] in furthering political aims. The Association also claimed to be the sole political body of Muslims representing the Muslims from all over India. It also took the responsibility of conveying, representing and interpreting the legitimate wants and aspirations of the Indian Muslims.

Political phraseology is an index of political thinking. From this point of view, the phrases used by the Association in defining its aims and methods reflected the progressive character and higher level of its political thinking. The phraseology adopted by the Association was an addition to the contemporary Muslim political dictionary. To have designated the Association as "Central" and "National" highlighted its claim to be the only "bonafide political body"[2] of all the sections of Muslim community. As it strove to translate Muslim numerical strength and homogeneity into political advantage it may be safely inferred that the very title of the Association underscored Muslim nationhood. In contrast, Nawab Abdul Latif did not consider it advisable to give an overtly political colour to the Mahomedan Literary Society. Similarly, Sir Syed who very often used the phrase Muslim nation or *qaum* preferred to style his political organization as the United Indian Patriotic Association which was singularly devoid of any positive political programme for the Muslims so characteristic of the Association. In this respect, the Association was distinct and different from other Muslim associations and societies, not only in name but also in aims and outlook, and in fairness cannot be dismissed as "another pressure group from Bengal" standing behind a grandiloquent title[3] as alleged by Anil Seal.

The Association was not content with theoretical exposition of Muslim politics in progressive and liberal terminology, but took positive steps for implementation of its objectives. In its tone and temper, the Association had greater affinity with the Indian Association of Surendranath Banerjea than with any other contemporary Muslim organization. But this resemblance cannot be construed to attribute its creation to the influence of Surendranath Banerjea even though he was on very friendly

1. *Ibid.*, p. i.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

3. Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, p. 385. Unpublished thesis for Ph.D., Cambridge University, 1962. (Now it has been published.)

terms with Ameer Ali. Surely, Ameer Ali had conceived the idea of the Association long before the establishment of the Indian Association.

Although the Association primarily stood for Muslim rights, it was conscious of the fact that Muslim welfare was "intimately connected with the well-being of other races of India." Cooperation with other communities was the keynote of its policies, and it was firmly committed to the "advocacy and furtherance of the public interests of the people"[1] of the subcontinent at large. The aims of inter-communal harmony were incorporated in the constitution of the Association, and under Rule 8 any non-Muslim could be elected a member.[2] Consequently, the Association enjoyed the moral support and sympathy of non-Muslim members and appreciated their contribution to the Muslim uplift. In 1882, while complaining of the blockade of "every avenue to public employment...by members of a different race", the Association took care to emphasize that their remarks were not meant to reflect upon the Hindu community."[3] Moderation and sense of judiciousness characterized its relations with the Hindus and other non-Muslim communities. In 1883, Raja Inder Chunder Singh of Paikpara was an honorary vice-president, and Babu Saligram Singh and K. M. Chatterji were members of the Committee of Management.[4] Among the list of honorary members figured the names of Hindu leaders like Surendranath Banerjea, Kristo Das Pal, Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore, and eminent English officials like Baring, Muir, Hunter, Ilbert and Cotton.[5]

The Association formulated a framework of rules to regulate its countrywide organization. The national executive was vested in a Committee of Management functioning through its president, vice-presidents, secretary and other office bearers. As founder secretary, Ameer Ali was given ample authority to shape and direct the policies of the Association. The election of members followed the club method of proposal and acceptance, but the Association was far from exclusive. Hundreds of members from the lower middle class and poor segment of the community took up membership even though the annual subscription of six rupees was quite high in those times. In 1883, the Association had 1,518 members on its rolls,[6] and by 1883 their number had risen to 3,232.[7] It was no

1. *QCNMA*, p. ii.
2. *Ibid.*, p. iv.
3. *Education: Home Department Proceedings, 1885*, Vol. 2506, p. 529.
4. *QCNMA*, p. 15.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-30, 33-65.
7. *Triennial Report Central National Mahomedan Association, 1885-1888*, Calcutta, 1888, (Henceforth *TCNMA*), pp. 79-95, 98-125, and 128-207.

elitist group. The broad spectrum of membership from different social strata, represented by lawyers, professors, editors, doctors, engineers, high officials, zemindars, ulema, maulvis, *pirs*, merchants, shopkeepers, school teachers, *patwaris*, police constables, clerks, and craftsmen made the Association a truly national organization.

In 1888, the Association could boast of 69 branches scattered all over Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the Punjab, and N. W. Provinces.[1] This large network of branches was unique in contemporary Muslim politics, and almost rivalled if not exceeded the more influential Indian National Congress. The Branch Associations were no paper bodies, but played an active role in local affairs and cooperated with the parent body "in all questions concerning the general Mahomedan community..." . Ameer Ali often toured about the country[3] in order to cultivate personal contacts with the leaders of branch Associations and foster feelings of solidarity. The branch Associations were required not only to "furnish a solid link binding together the widely scattered...groups of Mussulman population".[4] but also to guide the Government in matters pertaining to Muslim interests. Calcutta, Karachi, Lahore, Patna, Madras, Badaon, and Surat branches commanded large and active membership and played a significant role in the Association. Bengal and the Punjab, the Muslim majority provinces were the main centres of activity of the Association. In 1884, the Association proposed the holding of an annual conference of the branch Associations in order to discuss the common Muslim problems and to coordinate the overall activities of the Association.[5] Although, for some reasons, no conference of delegates could be convened, the very idea of holding a moot on a national scale reflected the national character of the Association. The CNMA approached the Muslim public through a network of newspapers. In 1888, *Urdu Guide*, and the *Muhammadan Observer*, both edited by Shams-ul-Ulema Kabir-ud-Din Ahmad, projected the views of CNMA in Bengal.[6] *Rafiq-i-Hind* edited by Muharram Ali Chishti disseminated its aims in the Punjab. In general, the Muslim press was well-disposed towards the Association and helped in the promotion of its cause. In a true sense, the Association reflected social consensus, national

1. For an appraisal of number and nature of membership, and work of the branch Associations see *Syed Ameer Ali, Pioneer of Muslim Politics, 1878-1904* by the present author.

2. *QCNMA*, pp. viii-ix.

3. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

4. *QCNMA*, p. 4, IOL.

5. *ICNMA*, p. 82.

6. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 4 May 1889.

outlook, and political vision which gave it the strength to put a prolonged fight not only for Muslim rights but also for the recognition of separate Muslim political identity.

The Memorial:
A Document of Muslim Demands

As Ameer Ali had been in personal contact with Bright and Fawcott—the leaders of English Liberalism—he could easily appreciate the impact of English Liberalism on Indian policy. With the advent of Liberals to power, he foresaw some change in "the principles upon which India has hitherto been governed", and hoped that Liberals would avoid "the mistakes which vitiated the policy of their predecessors in office". The Tory policy suffered from "absence of sympathy between the ruler and ruled".[1] In 1880, Gladstone sent Ripon to implement his Liberal policies. In inaugurating a new policy, Ripon in fact gave recognition to the emerging educated elite and progressive forces in India. Since his personal convictions and Indian aspirations were largely compatible, his assumption of office as the Viceroy of India raised the hopes and expectations of all the Indian communities. This earned him the willing cooperation of the people. With sagacity and moderation, he set about to undo the wrongs inflicted on India by his predecessor. Home Government endorsed his initiative and expedited the repeal of Vernacular Press Act. Hartington asked Ripon to look into the question of repeal of the Vernacular Press Act and the Arms Act, and conveyed to him Gladstone's particular anxiety about their repeal.[2] He further emphasized that Gladstone and the Liberal Party in the House of Commons were anxiously awaiting the repeal or modification of the Vernacular Press Act.[3] After examining this Act, Ripon concluded that it had been "passed with indecent haste", but its repeal ought to be the result of full and unfettered deliberation".[4] Hartington emphasized that the Act could only be continued 'at the cost of prolonging a cause of irritation on the part of the Native Press'.[5] Ripon applied the Liberal principles with caution, and repealed the Vernacular Press Act in December 1881.[6] It was a concession to Indian sentiments, and implied a recognition of the Indian public opinion.

1. Syed Ameer Ali, "Some Indian Suggestions for India", *The Nineteenth Century*, June 1880, p. 963.

2. Hartington to Ripon, 25 June 1880, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State, RC*.

3. Hartington to Ripon, 16 July 1880, *Ibid.*

4. Ripon to Hartington, 30 December 1880, *Ibid.*

5. Hartington to Ripon, 14 January 1881, *Ibid.*

6. Ripon to Hartington, 10 December 1881, *Ibid.*

At the same time, Ripon gave consideration to the reform of the civil service structure. Inglis, a member of the Legislative Council, drew up some proposals for the re-organization of the Civil service both Covenanted and Uncovenanted.[1] It encouraged Syed Mahmud to submit a scheme for the establishment of a Native Civil Service on the lines of Covenanted Civil Service.[2] Such proposals were widely discussed, and presumably Ameer Ali and Ameer Husain were not unaware of Syed Mahmud's scheme which was also commented upon by Syed Husain. In the meantime, Ripon undertook a review of the Indian education and sought 'to extend its benefits more widely'.[3] He was also keen to dispel the general impression that the 'Government entertained a desire to impede the spread of Higher Education among the Natives'.[4] He recommended a 'complete and general inquiry upon an uniform basis into the present state of working of our education system as a whole...' Hartington agreed with him and also desired an extensive enquiry. Ripon promised that the hands of the proposed Commission would not be tied 'too narrowly'.[5] Accordingly in January 1882, Hunter was appointed to head the Education Commission.[6]

The Association took stock of the situation, and authorized Ameer Ali to draft a memorial embodying 'the various grievances of the Muslim community.'[7] The memorial was examined twice in the general meetings of the Association, and approved for submission to the Government. The Memorial was primarily drafted to anticipate 'the task entrusted to the Commission, but it embraced areas far more extensive than education.'[8] The Association considered that Muslim education was not purely a matter of academic policies, but a politico-economic issue related to employment. For Muslims, education and employment issues meant much more than mere assignment of their due share in state patronage, but called for the formulation of principles on which Muslim rights were to be secured in future. The Memorial thus epitomised Muslim aspirations and crystallised their grievances. Studied against the background

1. Ripon to Hartington, 17 December 1881, *Ibid.*

2. Mahmud to Primrose, 7 February 1882, *Correspondence in India, RC* (Syed Husain's comments appear in Appendix B of this letter).

3. Ripon to Hartington, 3 June 1881, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State, RC.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. Ripon to Hartington, 28 July 1881, *Ibid.*

6. Ripon to Hartington, 7 January 1882, *Ibid.*

7. *QCNMA*, p. 11.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

of contemporary writing, the Memorial unmistakably did represent the Muslim feelings and opinions on all major issues faced by Muslim community all over South Asia.

The memorialists referred to 'the present impoverished condition of the Muhammadans of India,' and pointed out that the 'causes which have led to the decadence and ruin' of the Muslims under the British rule, were 'still at work'[1] in the Muslim society, and after decades of deprivation their poverty had become the cause of further retardation. In their state of subjection and poverty, they were acutely conscious of their past glory which formed a favourite theme not only in political writing but also found expression in poetry. Hali's *Musaddas* reflected a poet's anguish over the decline of Muslim power. Long before Hunter's *Indian Mussulmans*, Muslims had been lamenting their ruin. Sir Syed was struck by Muslim deprivation after 1857.[2] However, the publication of *Indian Mussulmans* brought into focus large scale Muslim deprivation in Bengal as a result of British policies. In 1869, Sir Syed had complained of the elimination of the Muslims from services and their general ruin.[3] Similar opinions about Muslim decadence were voiced by Nawab Abdul Latif.[4] The Memorial thus highlighted the general concern of Muslims about their poverty and backwardness, analysed this problem in its historical perspective, and traced Muslim economic and educational retrogression to the ill effects of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, and to the Resumption Proceedings.[5]

In no small degree, the Memorial argued, Muslim decay was a product of the political, economic and educational policies of the Government of India, and in fairness should not be attributed only to Muslim apathy towards English education. Urging the Government to accept its share of responsibility for having deprived Muslims of their rights, it pleaded for compensation by way of special measures to ameliorate their condition. The problem of Muslim uplift was so acute 'that no measure of reform adopted *within* the community would have any appreciable effect in arresting the progress of decay.'[6] It had been customary for the officials to place the blame entirely on Muslims for their own backwardness, but Muslim leaders gave partial credence to such allegations. The *Durbeen*,

1. "Memorial of the National Mahomedan Association", *India Home* (*Education*) *Proceedings*, Vol. 2506, pp. 525-31, paras 2-3. Henceforth the Memorial.
2. *Lekchron Ka Majmua*, p. 4.
3. *Khutut Sir Syed*, p. 50.
4. *SAPEM*, p. 210.
5. *The Memorial*, Paras 9-15.
6. *Ibid.*, Para 4.

a Persian newspaper of Calcutta, emphasized Government's responsibility for excluding Muslims from employment.

> The Government is bound to look upon all classes of its subjects with an equal eye, yet the time has come when it publicly singles out the Mohammedans in its Gazettes for exclusion from official posts. Recently, when several vacancies occurred in the office of Sunderbans Commissioner, that official, in advertising them in the Government Gazette, stated that the appointments would be given to none but Hindus. In short, the Mohammedans have sunk so low, that even when qualified for Government employment, they are studiously kept out of it by Government notifications.[1]

Even after the publication of Hunter's forceful *Indian Mussulmans*, Muslim position in services did not improve and the Government remained unmoved. *Punjabi Akhbar* lamented that Muslims were 'not freely admitted into the service',[2] but in turn were blamed for not educating themselves and ignored their grinding poverty which prevented them from acquiring proper education. Their lack of education should not be taken to mean that Muslims were unfit to do anything and pleaded for greater opportunities for them. The Government had been apprised of this problem several times but without any positive results.[3] *The Aligarh Institute Gazette* expressed surprise at the low number of Muslims in the Government departments in general, and in the judicial department in particular.

> The number of Muslims in Government departments bears no relation to their proportion in the population of the country.[4]

Nawab Abdul Latif attributed the Muslim backwardness to their 'natural pride and great bigotry', but at the same time pointed out that it was 'not the whole truth.'[5] He commented:

> The British Government, in the consciousness of irresistible might, felt under no obligation to conciliate prejudices. The Mahomedan bigotry, such as it was, not inherently worse than the prepossessions of other communities.[6]

Similarly Muslims of Nuddea district submitted a memorial to the Lieut.-Governor of Bengal praying for special consideration of Muslim candidates

1. *Durbeen*, 14 July 1869, cited in *Indian Mussulmans*, p. 158.
2. *Punjabi Akhbar*, 8 April 1876, *NWPNR*, 1876.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *AIG*, 14 July 1876.
5. *SAPEM*, p. 211.
6. *Ibid*, p. 211.

in matter of selection for government appointments.[1] Although the Government invariably dismissed such petitions on the plea that the grant of special favours to a particular community would militate against the principles of impartiality and justice. The memorial was not treated so lightly.

The official argument in favour of an equal and fair treatment for Hindus and Muslims was essentially specious as it ignored the fact that for decades Hindus had been the recipients of Government favour, while Muslims in general till 1882 were regarded with mistrust and suspicion. Now they were getting disillusioned with the much flaunted impartiality of the Government. Ripon reported an "unpleasant state of things at Delhi",[2] where the Muslims were suspected of having prayed for the victory of Arabi Pasha over the British.[3] How could the Government professions of impartiality in the dispensation of state patronage carry conviction with the Muslims when they were made to feel that they were special objects of Government's suspicion and vigilance. Under the influence of their new leaders, Muslims had been giving unqualified loyalty to the Government, but their loyalty did not seem to carry them far. Some of the Muslim leaders were quick to discern this contradiction between the Government professions of impartiality and its inability to grant due rights to educated Muslims in state patronage. Under the circumstances, harping on the tunes of impartiality was nothing but an official device to gloss over Muslim grievances, and so far Hindus were concerned their vociferous insistence on impartiality was a political stratagem to preserve their own vested interests. The Government's image of impartiality did not appear to be genuine to Muslims. As the Government was openly utilizing the general revenues for the education and uplift of the Christian Eurasian minority,[4] its image of impartiality was patently spurious. Not expecting a similar treatment, as was being given to the Eurasians, they only wanted assistance for the solution of their problems. Although they apprehended the dangers of dependence on state assistance, their general poverty had forced them to ask for special attention.[5] But the Government made little serious effort to understand the Muslim point of view. In 1881, Syed Mahmud had also brought up

1. *Education Gazette*, 10 November 1876, *BNNR*, 1876.

2. Ripon to Hartington, 3 August 1882, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State, RC.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. Ameer Ali, "A Cry from the Indian Mahomedans," *The Nineteenth Century*, August 1882, p. 210.

5. *The Memorial*, Para. 17.

this point with the Government. He remonstrated:

> But to speak with the candour of a friend, I think the British rule has shown want of genius in dealing with, or rather ignoring the peculiar socio-political conditions of the Mussulmans. If you look through the Statute Book of India, as it now stands, you will find little in it to impress you with the feeling that the legislature has taken due cognisance of the needs and wants of the Mahomedan community. The same, I believe can be said of the history of executive administration. It is a matter which grieves me deeply that almost the only occasions on which any attention is paid to the Mussulman community, either by the public press or the Government, are on those on which some acts of violence, or feelings of disloyalty are attributed to them.[1]

Ameer Ali gave expression to similar sentiments in his article 'A Cry from the Indian Mahommedans', which was an uninhibited re-statement of the Memorial.

> It is no exaggeration to say that English officials generally are at this day as far from understanding the real feelings of the Indian Mahommedans as they were half a century ago.[2]

The Memorial also pointed out that the educated Hindus held a monopoly of Government employment, and even well-qualified Muslims found all avenues of public employment blocked against them by the Hindus.[3] Now Muslims were not so backward in English education as they had been twenty years ago, but their educational progress had not brought about a corresponding change in their prospects in Government employment. Naturally all sections of Muslim society felt concerned about their future. Highlighting this question, the Memorial presented comparative tables of Hindu and Muslim share in the Government service.[4] Muslims felt convinced that their exclusion from Government service was the result of the obstructive tactics of Hindu employees who had successfully paralysed Government's feeble initiative in the matter of restoration of state patronage to the Muslims.[5] Even some high English officials conceded that as a result of Hindu monopoly of Government service Muslims had been reduced to 'comparative insignificance,'[6] in the Indian socio-political

1. Ripon to Hartington, 15 July 1881, *Correspondence in India, RC*, *op. cit*. (Syed Mahmud's letter formed an enclosure of Ripon's letter).
2. Ameer Ali, "A Cry from the Indian Mahommedans". *op. cit*., p. 193.
3. *The Memorial*, Para, 18.
4. *Ibid*., Para. 13.
5. *Ibid*., Para. 18.
6. Ferguson to Ripon, 12 July 1880, *Correspondence in India, RC*.

setup, while the high-caste Hindus were 'utterly outstripping them by their eager pursuit of education and great wealth.'[1] In comparison, Muslim community lacked a middle class, and was too poor to engage in industrial or commercial activity, and its masses eked out their livelihood on subsistence level agricultural economy. Consequently the public service was of far greater importance to a Muslim than to a Hindu, Parsi, or an Eurasian.[2]

Some facets of Muslim education and employment as taken up in the Memorial are typified in the above discussion. This issue was further complicated by the Urdu-Hindi controversy which had been raging with unabated bitterness for the last fifteen years. The Hindus had begun to press for the substitution of Urdu language written in Persian script, with Hindi written in Devnagri script. They felt that Hindi alone represented their cultural identity, and emphasis on Hindi had gained momentum with the spread of Hindu revivalism. Not only did they disown Urdu, they looked upon its continuance as an imposition. *Benares Akhbar* blamed Muslims for opposing the introduction of Hindi script 'with all their strength'[3] and complained:

> This is simply done to oppress and trouble the Hindus, they still wish to do the same to us as they did when they were the Governors of the country.[4]

But the Muslims looked upon this problem from a different angle. They prized Urdu as the living symbol of centuries of Hindu-Muslim social contact and accord, enriched by their highest creative faculties through the centuries. As in the past Urdu should continue to be the instrument for widening the areas of social and political co-operation between the communities. Any disruption of the linguistic unity of Northern India, and organic growth of centuries, was tantamount to poisoning the very founts of common Indian nationhood.

The first assault on Urdu did not come from the Hindus, but was the result of Government initiative. In 1837, the Government decreed that office business thenceforth was to be conducted in English or in the provincial dialects written in their particular scripts. Persian was abolished as a court language. As a result of this policy non-Hindi languages like Tamil, Telegu, and Mahratti came into their own in southern India. Urdu gained currency in the Punjab, N. W. Provinces and Bihar. Later

1. *Ibid.*
2. *The Memorial*, Para, 16.
3. *Benares Akhbar*, 3 February 1876, *NWPNR., 1876.*
4. *Ibid.*

on, the Government's attempt to introduce Hindi script in Bihar failed[1] but had the effect of setting Hindus and Muslims against each other. In its bid to promote Devnagri script, the Government responded favourably to the Hindu agitation for this cause. In 1867, Sir Syed had to take up the cause of Urdu in N. W. Provinces. These Government policies gave rise to misgivings among the Muslims, so truly reflected in *Urdu Guide*, a Muslim newspaper from Bengal:

> To create differences of language amounts to creating new differences between them....Since the beginning of Urdu-Hindi dispute the Government has also interfered in it, and since then the seed of mutual discord and hostility has been planted in both the communities. It is not sound politics. The Government Resolution encouraging the people of every district and Pargnah to learn their own language is calculated to bring about such a singular confusion and such a catastrophe as God sent down on Babylon. To educate the people of districts separately is like imprisoning them in different prisons and isolating them from each other.[2]

Neither deterred by Muslim protests nor by its own past failures the Government was determined to push through its policy of establishing Hindi in Bihar. In 1880, the Government asked for a report about the extent to which 'the substitution of the Nagri and Kaithi character for that of Persian in the Magistrates and Collectors court has been carried out.'[3] Halliday reported that the orders were 'imperfectly carried out,'[4] and the position had remained unchanged for the last seven years when the reform in favour of Devnagri script was first introduced. As the staff in the courts still found Urdu to be easier they refused to get familiar with Nagri and Kaithi scripts. He recommended:

> It is therefore necessary to adopt stringent measures in order to enforce the orders of three successive Lieutenant-Governors, which have certainly been ignored in this division, and to render the substitution of Kaithi and Nagri, in the place of Persian character, a reality in the business of courts in Behar.[5]

The Resolution of Government of Bengal, dated 13 April, 1880 embodied some strict measures and prescribed Hindi as an essential qualification

1. *The Memorial*, Para. 11.

2. *Urdu Guide*, cited in *AIG*, 26 March 1876.

3. Halliday to Secretary, Government of Bengal, General Deptt., 12 March 1880, *Bengal General Proceedings Miscellaneous*, Vol. 1476, 1880, IOL.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

for the police and the subordinate staff working in the courts.[1] Hindi was introduced by executive order, and 'the doggedness'[2] displayed by the Government in its enforcement gave it an air of Hindu partisanship. The Muslims stood aggrieved. Already disgruntled with their virtual exclusion from higher jobs now Muslims found to their chagrin that in Bihar the Government was busy contriving their elimination from the subordinate service as well by enforcing rigorously the rules regarding proficiency in Hindi and Kaithi script. The Memorial pointed out, that the changes brought about by the Government's language policy had hurt the Muslims twice during the last fifteen years, and two waves of unemployment had struck the Muslim society. Till 1864, the Muslims had remained complacement in their mistaken belief, that the Government still regarded their classics as "*sine qua non* for Government employment, or for entering the profession of law".[3] This impression persisted as the Indian candidates were permitted to take their examination for munsiffship and pleadership in Urdu or English. Naturally Muslim candidates availed of the option for Urdu. But, this option was withdrawn putting the Muslim candidates to a serious disadvantage. So far Muslims had felt little necessity for English education, but now it could not be acquired at a short notice.[4] In 1880, the second dose of linguistic change was administered which accelerated the process of Muslim deprivation. As the Hindi script affected even a common Muslim, there arose a general feeling of dissatisfaction against the Government. The distressed Muslims of Bihar submitted memorials to the Government of Bengal requesting for cancellation of orders substituting Hindi for Urdu script. These demands were incorporated in the Memorial which emphasized the value of Urdu as a common medium of expression both among the Hindus and Muslims. On the language question, the Memorial voiced the feelings of Muslims from all over India.

The Memorial also took notice of the administration of Muslim Law after the abolition of the offices of *Qazi-ul-Quzat*, and the Qazis in the Mofussil. They used to expound the Muslim Law before the European magistrates, but since the abolution of the office of Qazis the Muslims felt that their cases regarding marriages, divorces and alimony were not being decided in accordance with their religious law. This created a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction[5] articulated by Muslim leaders, newspapers, and

1. *Ibid., File 73-2.*
2. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
3. *The Memorial*, Para. 12.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, Para. 19.

societies who pressed the Government to re-appoint the Qazis. Nawab Abdul Latif had endeavoured to get through a bill envisaging the voluntary registration of Muslim marriages and divorces, and the appointment of Law officers with duties similar to those of the Qazis.[1] The Association had given its full support to the "Kazi Bill," but now felt strongly that the system was inadequate, and Muslim Personal Law was not being properly administered by the courts presided over by the English or Hindu Magistrates.

Highlighting the ever growing disparity in the numbers of Hindu and Muslim officials in various departments, the Memorialists affirmed:

> 'In 1871, the proportion of Mahomedans to Hindus in the gazetted appointments was less than one-seventh, in 1880, the proportion fell below one-tenth. But in other and less conspicuous departments where the distribution of state patronage is less closely watched, that the fate of the Mussulmans may be more accurately observed.'[2]

Citing employment figures of various departments,[3] the Memorialists pointed out that Muslim employment did not in any way correspond with their numerical strength in the Lower Provinces of Bengal where they formed one third of the total population. It was further stressed:

> 'In the Eastern districts, viz. Fureedpore, Pubna, Mymensingh, Rajshahye, Chittagong, Midnapore, Rungpore, the Mussulmans out-number Hindus in some places forming at least two-thirds of the whole population.'[4]

The Memorialists also took up the question of Muslim endowments, which had been a cause of concern to their community for almost two decades. The Government had been diverting the income from Muslim Trust properties to its general revenues, and spending it on those institutions from which Hindus benefited the most. Muslims of Bengal disapproved the mis-direction of incomes from the Mohsin Trust by the Government. Nawab Abdul Latif had obtained an official dispensation for the proper utilization of these incomes as originally intended[5] by the donor. But since this principle was not applied to other Muslim endowments, it remained an isolated act of goodwill. Grievances kept on growing in different quarters. The Shia community of Delhi complained that the incomes from the I'timad-ud-Dowla Trust, instead of being

1. For further details of "Kazi Bill" see Chapter III.
2. *The Memorial*, Para. 13.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. See Chapter III.

utilized for the education of the Shia children were being spent by the Director of Public Instructions for the Anglo-Oriental School.[1] The Memorial urged the Government to adopt a uniform policy with regard to Muslim Trust incomes which should be applied for the promotion of Muslim education only.[2] The Memorial also pleaded for the appointment of a Commission to examine the whole question of Muslim endowments which lay scattered all over the country, and to determine if the incomes from trusts primarily endowed for religious education could be utilized under the changed circumstances, for general education.[3]

The Memorial was an apologia for Muslim backwardness in English education. Notwithstanding Muslim responsibility for having rejected English education, the Memorialists argued at length that the present state of Muslim education was largely the product of the anti-Muslim policies of the British. They urged the Government to appoint a special Commission to examine the whole question of Muslim education, and as it was not a matter of subsidiary importance, it should not be left to the newly appointed Education Commission. At the same time, they complained of the inadequate Muslim representation in the Education Commission.[4]

Assuring the Government of Muslim loyalty to the British Crown, the Memorialists asked the Government to appreciate the causes of the "widespread feeling of dissatisfaction among all classes of Mahomedans in India with the present state of things." It would be highly inadvisable to persist in policies which might turn passive Muslim dissatisfaction into an open discontent.[5] Some members of the Muslim elite like Syed Mahmud had also emphasized the desirability of adopting measures for securing the sympathy of Muslims by promoting their legitimate aspirations. He warned that otherwise Muslims would be reduced to poverty and ignorance and might not hesitate to look to Muslims of other countries for help and deliverance.[6] The Government of India knew better about the prevalent Muslim uneasiness through its secret service, as Muslim sympathy for Arabi Pasha had begun to mingle with their general grievances against the British Government. In Delhi, preachers, in a Friday sermon, "expressed a desire to see

1. *Rahbar-i-Hind*, 24 November 1877, *NWPNR*, 1877.
2. *The Memorial*, Para. 23.
3. *Ibid.*, Para. 24.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, Paras. 6-7.
6. Syed Mahmud to Henderson, 15 June 1881, *Correspondence with Secretary of State*, *RC*, (enclosure).

another mutiny at Delhi and a general slaying of kaffirs. Great discontent was also expressed towards the British Government on the grounds that the Mahomedans were of no account, the best and highest appointments being given to Hindus."[1] In this respect, the Memorialists could claim with ample justification to have 'honestly and faithfully,[2] represented the demands, and reflected the discontent of Muslims of the subcontinent.

1. Lt. A. H. Manson, Private Secretary to the Lt.-Governor of the Punjab to Primrose' 2 August 1882, *Correspondence in India, RC.* (Mason enclosed an extract from Mr. D. H. Hunter officiating District Superintendent of Police, Delhi, from which these lines have been excerpted).

2. *The Memorial*, Para. 27.

CHAPTER V

REACTIONS TO THE MEMORIAL : A DEFINITION OF MUSLIM DEMANDS

The Memorial fostered among the Muslims an awareness of the far reaching socio-political issues like education, employment and Urdu. By focussing their attention on these issues the Association enriched the process of thought and action which culminated in the definition of separate Muslim political entity in the constitutional setup of South Asia. If the political activity of the Association had not atrophied after 1888, the emergence of a countrywide Muslim political organization would not have been delayed till 1906. However, it was within the broad framework of education, employment and Urdu, that the Muslim political effort manifested itself after 1882. Neither new, nor unknown, these problems were dealt with severally by Sir Syed and Nawab Abdul Latif, but were not coordinated by them into an overall political demand of Muslim India. This work was done by Ameer Ali, and the Association alone made an organized effort to project the commonly felt Muslim grievances and aspirations on the Indian political platform.

Muslim reaction to the Memorial represented a broad spectrum of Muslim public opinion in South Asia. Several Muslim organizations and individuals lent their support to the cause of the Association, sometimes as a direct affirmation of their standpoint set forth in the Memorial, or generally by way of parallel action comprising representations and petitions on similar lines submitted to the Government and the Education Commission. In this manner, they either lent emphasis or gave confirmation to the Memorial. If the non-political Muslim bodies also joined in it was not sheer coincidence, but revealed a common pattern of Muslim consciousness, to regain the position they had lost as a community. But not all Muslim bodies and individuals were inspired by the Association, and naturally their opinions on some points showed large margins of disagreement. As the differences were not fundamental, the facade of Muslim unanimity remained unimpaired. The cause of Urdu was being espoused both by the opponents of English education and its admirers. Muslim exclusion from Government service was as much a matter of concern for

those possessing English education, as it was for those who were well-versed in traditional Muslim learning. Although by 1883, opposition to English education had petered out, the controversy had not died down regarding the degree to which English education should be coordinated with Urdu and Classical languages and literature. Similarly different views were expressed about the remedial measures, but that was understandable in view of the varying circumstances of Muslims in different provinces. Preferential treatment for the Muslims in education and state patronage was endorsed by a large number of Muslim elite but was rejected by some of them. In prescribing special treatment as the only potent remedy for checking the process of further Muslim decay, Ameer Ali and Badruddin Tyabji did not exclude Muslim effort but asked the Government to own its responsibility for the damage done to Muslims by its policies and to compensate them for their loss. Special treatment was sought not as a permanent concession, but as a catalyst. Both of them applied flawless historical analysis, and sound moral judgement to justify exceptional treatment for Muslims. Political expediency made their demands plausible. In contrast, Sir Syed argued in a pragmatic manner that the Government would not be prepared to compromise its public posture of impartiality for the sake of exceptional Muslim treatment even though well justified. Emphasizing self-help as the best remedy, he did not rule out special grants-in-aid for Muslim educational institutions. Although some controversy did arise on the issue of remedial measures, but was not serious enough to deflect the leaders from their common aim of Muslim progress. This public debate did not imply negation of Muslim grievances, rather it helped to highlight their importance in Muslim national life. Viewed from this angle, the Memorial epitomised the political aspirations of Muslims of South Asia in the later 19th century.

Ameer Ali on behalf of the Association, sent the Memorial to the Secretary, Government of Bengal. He wrote, that, since the Memorial pertained mainly to Muslim education which was currently under consideration of the Government of India, it would be advisable if the Memorial was forwarded to the Government of India "with the least practicable delay."[1] The Government of Bengal complied with his request, but at the same time expressed its reservations about certain 'facts and arguments'[2] presented in the Memorial. The Government of India circulated the

1. Ameer Ali to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 6 February 1882, *India's Home Proceedings* (*Education*), 1885, Vol. 2506, p. 523.

2. Bayley to Offg. Under Secretary Government of India, 17 February, 1882, *Ibid.*

Memorial on 8 March 1882 to all the Presidencies, Provincial Governments, the Chief Commissioners, and to the Resident at Hyderabad, asking for a "full and careful report on the allegations and prayers of the Memorial so far were applicable to the position and claims of the Mahommedan community"[1] in their respective jurisdictions. Views were also invited from the Chief Justices and Judges of the High Courts, Judges of the Chief Courts and Judicial Commissioners on paras 19, 22, and 26 of the Memorial. The Government of India, in a separate letter, asked the Lieut. Governor of Bengal to 'examine somewhat closely and minutely all the allegations and pleas put forward therein,' and required a 'full expression of his views upon the whole subject.'[2] The action taken by the Government of India showed that it considered the Memorial as a matter of serious concern, and in this manner gave tacit recognition to the countrywide role of the Association.

After the submission of the Memorial, political activity flowed in two parallel lines, the first one was exemplified by the Government action, and the second one by the Association which began to mobilize public opinion for the Memorial in order to exert pressure on the Government. Ameer Ali sought to awaken the English public opinion regarding the wrongs suffered by the Muslims of India, and re-stated the Muslim case in his article 'A Cry From The Indian Mahommedans', published in the influential *Nineteenth Century*. It was a liberal paraphrase of the Memorial. No longer constrained by the decorum of a formal petition to the Government, Ameer Ali now transmuted his arguments and feelings into a ringing rhetoric. His article was an impassioned portrayal of Muslim suffering and a fervent remonstrance of Muslim India. He complained of the 'over-sensitiveness of the Indian Government and its subordinate officers to outside criticism', and of its eagerness to discourage 'frank expression of political feelings.'[3] He feared that criticism, however legitimate, was very often misconstrued to imply disloyalty. Hindus by virtue of their wealth and education could afford to ignore the hyper-critical attitude of the Government, but in contrast Muslims were not so happily placed and could not articulate even their legitimate grievances. However, it did not mean there was no dissatisfaction among the Muslims. As a matter of political necessity the Government should reappraise its policy towards the Muslims, and should appreciate that persistent distrust of Muslims was

1. Mackenzie to the Secretary, Government of Madras, 8 March 1882, *Ibid.*, p. 533.

2. Mackenzie to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, General Deptt., 8 March 1882, *Ibid.*

3. *The Nineteenth Century*, August 1882, p. 193.

not conducive to the growth of mutually beneficial relationship between them. He commented:

> But when the English talk of the 'dark ingratitude of the Mussulmans in not appreciating the benefits of British rule,' when they dwell on the common topic of Mussulman disloyalty and Mussulman disaffection, it will be well to remember the wrongs, both sentimental and substantial, which this class of Her Majesty's Indian subjects had to endure. ... Whilst, as I have said before, almost all other Indian nationalities have prospered under the British rule, the Mussulmans alone have declined.[1]

As the educated Muslims were conscious of the 'deep feeling of discontent'[2] pervading the Muslim society, he feared this latent discontent could develop into an active protest. Positive action was needed to deal with the situation, and Muslim point of view on remedial measures, should alone be considered. He sounded a note of warning:

> The time for mere sentimental expressions of sympathy and infructuous minutes and resolutions, leading to nothing, has gone by. Effectual measures are needed; words alone have no practical result.[3]

Expressing his views "plainly and publicly",[4] on the remedial measures, he hoped that he would be "evoking the interest of the English people on behalf of the Mussulmans" and in a way "assisting the statesmen who are now charged with the conduct of affairs, both here and in England, to understand correctly Mussulman feelings."[5] He also appealed to the British statesmen to appreciate the consequences of their present policies towards the Muslim nation:

> A nation consisting of upwards of fifty million souls, 'with great traditions but without a career,' deprived by slow degrees of wealth and influence by a policy of mistaken sentimentalism, mixed with a contemptuous disregard of popular feelings, must always constitute an important factor in the administration of India. It is this factor which cannot be ignored, and which must be taken into account by Government in all future projects for the well-being of India.[6]

His article served to bring the Muslim issue before the English public

1. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
6. *Ibid.*

opinion, otherwise the Memorial might have been consigned to the oblivion of a file in the India Office. At home, Ameer Ali activated the branch Associations which held frequent meetings to endorse the Memorial, and sent copies of their resolutions to the local Governments, and to the Government of India.

In the meantime, the local Governments began compiling the views and data submitted by official and non-official sources, and transmitted it to the Government of India which in turn made it available to the Education Commission. By and large, on the basis of the points raised by the Memorialists, the Education Commission devised its own questionaire on Muslim education which was widely circulated among the non-official bodies and prominent individuals. The Provincial Committees of the Education Commission toured their areas, ascertained local opinion, on the subject and their reports to the Education Commission which functioned as the final clearing house for evaluating Muslim public opinion.

Rivers Thompson, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal examined the Memorial, and in his minute exposed "the very obvious mistakes and fallacies"[1] on which the argument of the Memorial was based. The backwardness of the Muslim was not to be found in the general policies of the Government of Bengal "but in the habits, feelings and religious sentiments of the Mahomedans themselves." He feigned surprise that such "exploded arguments and retrograde views" had been expressed by English educated members of the Association. Although not willing to accept their argument, he was ready to show sympathy, and as far as possible render some Government support. He dismissed an inquiry into the causes of Muslim decadence as a 'profitless undertaking,[2] and repudiated as a lot of 'ill informed declamation,'[3] the allegation that Muslim deprivation had been the result of Resumption Laws. Commenting on Ameer Ali's article in *The Nineteenth Century*, he contended that the writer had failed to substantiate his observations on this point by any valid historical data. Not only did he insinuate that Ameer Ali had since then confessed his inability to do so, he accused him of drawing on his fancy. In a fit of self-righteousness, Rivers Thompson described Company's oppressive revenue assessment of Bengal as lenient, and dismissed allegations regarding the appropriation of rent free Muslim lands, and wholesale ruin

1. MacDonnel to The Secretary to the Govt. of India, 14 October, 1882, *India Home Proceedings (Education)*, 1885 Vol. 2506, p. 432.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 433.

inflicted on Muslims as a result of the Resumption Laws.[1] There was a tinge of personal pique in the arguments of Rivers Thompson who saw the Memorial as an affront, a denunciation of British policy and a reflection on his administration. In the same irate spirit, he denied that the change from Persian to English as official language had brought about the impoverishment of Muslim middle class.[2] Holding the Muslims responsible for their own backwardness, he argued how could the Government be blamed if the Muslims failed to avail of the equal opportunities offered to all the communities, and rejected as inconsistent their demand for special facilities in education. In short, he denounced the thesis of Muslim poverty as expounded in the Memorial. Referring to the remedial measures, suggested by the Memorialists with regard to admission to the bar he refused to accept any alternative to a University degree, and in this he was supported by the High Court. His zeal exceeded his veracity, as he claimed that the imposition of Hindi as official language in Bihar had been 'effected without difficulty and with great advantage to the public in general.'[3] He regarded the agitation for Urdu as something spurious:

> There is a reason to believe that this outcry against the use of Hindi in Bihar is rather a matter of factitious sentiment than of practical inconvenience. It is far louder among the Mahomedans of Calcutta who are not affected by the change than among the supposed sufferers.[4]

Rivers Thompson insisted that the introduction of Hindi was the "logical sequence of that exclusively Hindi teaching which has prevailed for ten years with such marked success,"[5] and glossed over the stringent measures applied to achieve that questionable degree of success. Indulging in a harmless platitude he patted the Memorialists for their eagerness to promote English education, and felt that facilities for higher education could be provided to Muslims without prejudice to others. Nevertheless, he was constrained to admit that the Government had already turned down a proposal submitted by Syed Ameer Husain, a member of the Association, for the establishment of a Muslim college in Calcutta on parallel lines to the Hindu College and Presidency College; since the Government thought that such a college would "not really tend to promote the permanent interests of Mahomedans in Bengal". But now due to the changed circumstances since December 1881, he was prepared to reconsider this pro-

1. *Ibid.*, p. 435.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 435-36.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

posal. It was an oblique recognition of the Association. Strangely enough, the Director of Public Instructions who had shot down Ameer Husain's proposal only few months before, now began to have second thoughts "whether the policy pursued by Government with regard to Mahomedan education is not mistaken."[1] Another concession, the Lt. Governor envisaged in principle was the appointment of a committee to advise the Government about Muslim education. But in practice he ruled out such a committee as superfluous, since, 'the feeling of the Mahomedan community has been so fully declared.'[2] But in case the Government of India considered it necessary it could refer that question to the Education Commission. He was sceptical about the usefulness of the Madrassahs of Chittagong, Dacca, Rajshahye, and Hoogly which were supported by the Mohsin Endowment, and emphatically repudiated Ameer Ali's comments in his article, that the Mohsin Endowment was not well managed. Urging the Association to exert its influence and restrain those Muslims who availed themselves of the Waqf properties, he absolved the Government of any responsibility in the matter. In matter of government employment, he upheld the policy of open competition, and considered it 'worse than useless for Mahomedans now to plead that Government should show any favour to a particular section of the community.'[3] Putting efficiency and impartiality above the interests of a particular creed, he attributed the exclusion of Muslims from employment to the want of qualified Muslim candidates, and was not willing to recommend any concessions for them.

After considering the Memorial, the Judges of Calcutta High Court gave their opinion to the Lt. Governor of Bengal regarding the administration of Muslim Law and appointment of Qazis. The High Court declined to recommend vernacular qualifications for pleadership examinations, and termed such suggestions as retrograde, and calculated to hamper the progress of one community for the sake of the other. They denied the allegations of miscarriage of justice due to insufficient knowledge of Muslim Law and dismissed such statements as 'entirely unsupported by evidence or illustration.'[4] Claiming to possess adequate knowledge of Muslim Law they regarded the appointment of Qazis or Muslim Law officers as unnecessary. In their opinion, the shortage of Muslims in the

1. *Ibid.*, p. 437.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Wilkins. Offg. Registrar of the Calcutta High Court to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Judicial, Political, and Appointments Deptt., 12 June, 1882, *Ibid.*, p. 440.

judicial service was due "to the lamentable scarcity of Mahomedan gentlemen of sufficient position and education,"[1] otherwise there was 'no hard and fast rule regarding the qualifications necessary for entering the Judicial Service, except that the candidate must be a member of recognized legal profession'.

In a glaring manner the polarity between the official view and the popular Muslim standpoint was highlighted by the evidence of Muslim leaders of Bengal before the Education Commission, and now it was the task of the Commission to explore areas of agreement and understanding between the Government and the Muslims. Despite their personal differences, Bengali Muslim leaders presented a common demand for the amelioration of the depressed Muslim community.

In March 1882, Nawab Abdul Latif appeared before the Education Commission and gave expression to his 'practical reflections'[2] on the present state of Muslim education. He considered the system of primary education as unsound and inadequate for the requirements of Muslim peasantry who formed the bulk of Muslim population in Bengal. He emphasized that primary education should continue to be given in Bengali, but Sanskritised Bengali used in schools was not acceptable to Muslims. As an alternative he suggested that the Bengali used for primary education 'must be a mean between highly Sanskritised Bengali of Hindu *Pathshalas* on one hand, and the Mussalman Bengali *patois* on the other, which is thickly intermingled with Persian and Arabic terms."[3] Since the Muslims regarded knowledge of Urdu and Persian as hall mark of refinement, Urdu teachers should be appointed in primary schools, Persian teachers in middle schools and Arabic and Persian teachers in high schools, in the predominantly Muslim areas. Urdu was the language of the Muslims of Bihar, and its substitution by Hindi constituted not only a grievance but also a 'stumbling block in the path of Mahomedan students in the existing system of education, and can to some extent account for their deficient progress." How could Muslims take proper advantage of education which ignored their mother tongue. It was imperative therefore, that "Urdu should be recognised and encouraged as the real vernacular"[4] for Muslims education in Bihar.

In no small degree, the popularity of the Wahhabi doctrines among Muslim peasantry was due "to the neglect of their education by the British Government," he argued and similarly the present state of ignorance of

1. *Ibid.*, p. 441.
2. *SAPEM*, p. 254-255.
3. *Bengal Education Commission Report*, p. 213.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

Muslim masses could be a source of 'political danger.'[1] As Muslims were often compelled to give up higher studies "from want of sufficient means," he pleaded for greater facilities for them. Analysing the chronic Muslim grievances regarding the Mohsin Trust he observed that even though the situation had somewhat improved the funds from such endowments were too insufficient for any large scale scheme for higher education. Better resources were needed to enable the Muslims "to cover the distance which separates them from Hindus."[2] As the general poverty handicapped Muslim exertions in the field of higher education, he saw no prospect of any effective voluntary financial effort by Muslims themselves.

> I repeat that there are very few persons who are in a position to emulate the liberality of the noblemen and gentlemen amongst the Hindu community who have founded and supported so many institutions and scholarships out of abundance of their wealth.
>
> I am quite conscious that in advocating special treatment for my co-religionists, I am going counter to the policy now contemplated by the Government of encouraging primary rather than high education; but I am encouraged to hope that for the reasons urged, the condition of the Muhammadans of India will not be treated as equal to that of their more favoured brethren on the Hindu community.[3]

Even though less comprehensive, Nawab Abdul Latif's opinions were not much at variance with the main argument of the Association. Perhaps in March 1882, he was not well aware of the contents of the Memorial submitted to the Government only a month before. But when, the Government of Bengal referred the Memorial to him for comments, he adopted a different attitude. Setting forth his views in a *Memorandum* now he attempted a point by point refutation of the contentions of the Memorialists of the Central National Mahomedan Association.[4] He rejected their thesis attributing Muslim decadence "solely to the action of the British Government, and not to acts of omission and commission on the part of the Mahomedans themselves."[5] Unfairly, he alleged, the Memorialists had exonerated Muslims of all responsibility for their decline. And they had done this to obtain "adhesion of several Mahomedans,

1. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.
4. He published his Memorandum under the title *'On The Present Condition of The Indian Mahomedans and The Best Means For Its Improvement.'* IOL. Henceforth *Memorandum.*
5. Abdul Latif, *Memorandum*, pp. 1-2.

who from various causes have not been in the habit of deliberating within themselves on such vital matters, and who are therefore more ready to adopt on trust views which do not reflect upon their national feelings, but rather promise them a royal road to preferment.'[1] Insinuation against the leaders and members of the Association was too obvious. Neither was Muslim welfare, a matter of 'individual interests' nor the concern of a "small community," he admonished, but a "question of one-third population of India," and should be taken up without "extraneous considerations," and in a "spirit of loyalty and devotion both to the Government and to the best interests of their own Community."[2] Refuting the historical explanation of Muslim decadence given by the Association, he affirmed that on the contrary British Government had been "very slow in interfering with Mahomedan supremacy in many Departments of the State."[3] He attributed Muslim Backwardness in Bengal not only to their neglect of English education, but also to their neglect of Bengali language. Had they been proficient in Bengali they could have secured minor appointments in the districts for which English qualifications were not compulsory. Even though the Government system of education overlooked "for the most part the peculiar educational requirements of the Mahomedans," Muslim student was generally hampered in English education by the "parallel course of studies" based on Muslim requirement to study Arabic and Persian. He was opposed to 'one-sided culture' which made the English educated classes "unfit for harmonising with the orthodox classes of the Mahomedan Community."[4] For these reasons, he favoured the continuation of the Arabic Madrassahs of Hoogly, Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahye. He disapproved the proposal regarding the utilization of some funds from the Mohsin Endowment for English education, as it would amount to violation of the will of the testator who had left this endowment for religious education, and pious purposes only. Since there were no Muslim endowment purely for educational purposes, there was no need to appoint a committee to examine the state of Muslim endowments as suggested by the Memorial. Finally, he urged the Government "to discard the views of 'Reformers' and to act in harmony with the views of the majority of Mahomedans, and to respect their religious feelings"[5] in this matter.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
2. *Ibid*, p. 2.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Decrying the suggestion of the Memorial, he stressed that any lowering of educational qualifications for Muslim candidates for certain appointments would be "most injurious to the best interests of the Mahomedan Community."[1] He even rejected the statistical tables of the Memorial comparing the Hindu and Muslim position in state employment, for their doubtful value in judging of the present position of the Mahomedans as compared with the Hindus.[2] But what was more significant, he repudiated the fundamental principle of the Memorial, that state patronage should be shared by Hindus and Muslims on the basis of their proportionate strength in the population of the country. He commented:

> The Memorial seems to suggest that the proportion between the members of Hindu and Mahomedan *employees* in the Government service ought to be the same as obtains between the totals of the respective populations. But if the Memorialists really mean this, they certainly overlook the circumstance that as regards Bengal, where the Mahomedans are most numerous, the mass of Mahomedan population consists of cultivators amongst some millions of Brahmins and Kayasthas, who from time immemorial have enjoyed a superior system of education and in consequence a passport to public office.[3]

Although exclusive privileges demanded by the Memorialists to balance the Muslim share in the distribution of state patronage conflicted with "the equitable principles which govern the English administration in India,"[4] he favoured the idea that greater facilities should be provided to Muslims for acquiring education, and that public funds be utilised to promote education in areas where Muslims were backward. He hoped that such assistance "could not be objected to by the communities amongst whom education is much more wide-spread."[5] But he contradicted himself when he argued that since Muslims could not attain a fair share of influence and power due to their poverty and ignorance they deserved "the sympathy and exceptional treatment of a benign Government." No special privileges "over and above those available to the general public," were asked for Muslims except that the Government should render help to enable them "to *qualify* themselves in a manner befitting their past history and the requirements of these advanced times, in the race for public preferment and general improvement."[6] Despite his vehement opposition, Nawab

1. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Abdul Latif had not moved very far away from the standpoint of the Association on many issues.

He conceded that the Muslim Law was not being properly administered but was not prepared to endorse remedial measures suggested by the Memorial. He thought the appointment of Muslim assessor judges was not likely to improve the administration of Muslim Law and advised that difficult cases could be referred to the Head Maulvie of Calcutta Masrassah in case of Orthodox Muslims and to the Mujtahids attached to the family of ex-King of Awadh.[1] He recommended that real improvement could only take place through the translation and compilation of Muslim Law. Though some Muslim gentlemen possessing higher English qualifications were eligible for appointment as Judges of the High Court, they lacked the requisite erudition in Arabic and Persian necessary for the interpretation of Muslim Law.[2] It was an oblique reference to Ameer Ali. Nawab Abdul Latif also opposed the Association's suggestion regarding the appointment of a separate commission to examine the subject of Muslim education.[3]

There was an undercurrent of personal antagonism towards Ameer Ali and his Association, throughout Nawab Abdul Latif's *Memorandum*. Although not unknown to the authorities, he laboured to prove that the writer of "A Cry From Indian Mahommedans" and the author of the Memorial was the same person. A comparative table of the diction and data of the article and the Memorial was drawn up to emphasize this point. He denied all credit to Ameer Ali for the article, and dismissed it as "a clever *rechaufee* of well known passages in the Hon'ble Dr. Hunter's *Indian Mussulmans* with information on some points brought down up to date." Their mutual dislike, deepened by political differences, was now unmistakably reflected in Nawab Abdul Latif's strong rejection of the Association "as the exponent of the views of the Mahomedan Community."[4] Perhaps no less important reason for the angry tone adopted by him in the *Memorandum* was his eagerness to be on the right side of Rivers Thompson who displayed undisguised irritation about the Memorial and its author. However, well-intentioned, the *Memorandum* was used by the Government of Bengal to scale down the representative character of the Association in the eyes of the Governor General and the Education

1. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Commission. Soon after the submission of the *Memorandum*, he saw MacDonnel and gave his reasons against the abolition of Mofussil Madrassah and the utilization of funds for raising the Calcutta Madrassah to the status of a College.[1] MacDonnell appreciated the *Memorandum*, and wrote to him:

> . . . I am glad to find that many of the views you express are in sympathy with those held by the Government of Bengal. In particular, your zeal (no newborn zeal) for English Education commends itself to the Lieutenant-Governor's approval;. . .[2]

In vindication of its policy regarding Muslim education, the Government of Bengal forwarded Nawab Abdul Latif's *Memorandum* to the Education Commission, which registered his objections to the Memorial.'[3]

In contrast with the discordant note struck by Nawab Abdul Latif, Syed Ameer Husain, a vice-president of the Association and member of the Bengal Legislative Council, lent his support to the Memorial. In 1880, after a "careful study"[4] he had written a pamphlet on Muhammadan Education in Bengal, proposing the abolition of all Madrassahs except that at Dacca, and the conversion of the Calcutta Madrassah into a college for imparting English education to Muslims only.[5] He claimed that his proposals reflected the feelings of Muslim elite who were "interested in educational questions and in the improvement of the condition of Mussulmans generally."[6] Ameer Husain's proposals were "supported by a considerable force of Mahomedan opinion, which found expression in native society and in the Press."[7] But, Croft, the Director of Public Instructions Bengal, insisted that Ameer Husain had "underrated the desire of Mahomedans for a purely Oriental education and that it was as yet premature to attempt any change in the system."[8] Rather in a perverse manner he had foiled the Muslim zeal for English education by persistent adherence to Oriental learning. Consequently the Association incorporated Ameer Husain's proposals as a demand in para 24 of the Memorial. And then in a flash, wisdom dawned on Croft ostensibly after having heard Sir Syed's evidence before the Education Commission.[9] But it seems most

1. *SAPEM*, p. 265.
2. MacDonnel to Nawab Abdul Latif, 18 April 1883, *Ibid.*, pp. 265-66.
3. *Report of the Education Commission*, p. 500.
4. *Bengal Education Commission Report*, p. 224.
5. Croft to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, General Deptt, 9 September 1882, *India Home Proceedings* (*Education*) 1885, p. 443.
6. MacDonnel to the Secretary to the Govt. of India, *Ibid.*, p. 437.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 437.
8. Croft to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, *Ibid.*, p. 443.
9. *Ibid.*

likely that in view of the popular demand engendered by the Association in public press, Croft found it politic to fall in line with the Association and his reference to Sir Syed's influence was nothing but a face saving device.

Sir Syed's evidence before the Education Commission confirmed many opinions and demands of the Association and inter-alia corrected the warped perspective of Government of Bengal. He advised "...whenever in any Madrassah Arabic is taught, coupled with a little English, harm is done to both studies, and consequently to the pupils."[1] However, he did not favour any exceptional treatment for Muslims, which he thought impinged on the impartiality of the Government. In his eyes, Muslims were themselves to blame for their "backwardness in the race of progress,"[2] but their "exceptionally unfortunate condition" and "deplorable ignorance and poverty" deserved the indulgence of the Government, as a "special case."[3] He advised the Government to encourage rich and influential Muslims to establish schools for the education of their co-religionists, and give liberal grants-in-aids to such institutions. He contended that Muslims had "a just and natural claim to all endowments which have been made by men of the Muhammadan community,"[4] and considered the existing use of Endowment funds as questionable. These views were in substantial agreement with the Memorial. Muslim employment as such was outside the points of reference of Education Commission which did not question Sir Syed on this problem. However, in referring to the fruits of English education, he pointed out, the number of Muslims in Government employment was small, as not many qualified in English education were available. This point was elaborated by the Government of N.W. Provinces in its memorandum carrying comments on the Memorial. To prove that the Muslims were receiving a "proportionate share of employment, and in some of the subordinate appointments in fact had a larger share of the state patronage", the Government of N. W. Provinces presented statistical data. The allegations of the Memorialists regarding the Muslim exclusion from services were rebutted as they were not "applicable to these provinces."[5] Ameer Ali had already conceded this point that "in the North-Western Provinces the disproportion between the two

1. *N.W.P. and Oudh Education Commission Report*, Calcutta 1884, Appendix, p. 30.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 255.
5. Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of N. W. Provinces and Oudh, to The Secretary to the Govt. of India, Home Deptt., 16 April, 1883, *India Home Proceedings* (*Education*), p. 448.

races is probably not so great."[1] The Government also denied the existence of "an adverse bias"[2] against the employment of Muslims in Government service. As there were no Muslim endowments under Government control or subject to official interference, the allegations regarding the misuse of their funds did "not accord with any specific facts known here."[3] The best interests of Muslims would not be served by making special arrangements for their education, but by emulating the example set by the M. A. O. College, which had already "taken the lead in introducing an excellent and most efficient system of high education."[4] Unlike Bengal, there was an appreciable measure of understanding between the Government of N. W. Provinces and Muslim leaders, and their views showed a close similarity with each other. The N. W. P. Government was quite restrained in its comments on the Memorial, and free from the stinging virulence which characterised comments of Government of Bengal.

The Government of Bombay examined the Memorial, and the Governor-in-Council observed that the Memorial was more relevant to Bengal and N.W. Provinces than to the circumstances of Muslims of Bombay. There was little "concerted action between the National Association of Calcutta and the leading Mahomedans of Bombay" on the general "needs and claims of the Mahomedan community." The Governor doubted if the Muslim leaders of Bombay "would endorse the pleas of self-helplessness ... especially in the matter of commercial enterprise referred to in the 17th paragraph."[5] The representative character of the Association was challenged, and even the existence of branch Associations in Bombay Presidency was conveniently ignored. Justice Bayley expressed similar views though more vehemently:

> I have no means of knowing what right a body of persons styling themselves as the 'National Mahomedan Association,' whose headquarters are apparently at Calcutta, have to profess to represent the Mahomedans in British India, who number upwards of 40 millions of persons, if indeed, they have any right to do so at all; nor do I know whether, ...the Memorialists have made that recommendation after communication with any Mahomedans in this city.[6]

1. 'A Cry from Indian Mahommedans', p. 204.
2. *India Home Proceedings* (*Education*), p. 449.
3. The Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of N. W. P. & Oudh to the Secretary to the Govt. of India, *India Home Proceedings*, *Ibid.*, p. 540.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 450.
5. Hon'ble C. Gonne, Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bombay, 6 October 1882, *Ibid.*, p. 44.
6. Minute by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bayley, *Ibid.*, p. 425.

Ostensibly, Government of Bombay showed concern about the virtual exclusion of Muslims from Government employment, and conceded that "not a single Mussulman is to be found among the Subordinate Judges in Sind, and in the Revenue Department outside Sind, "Two Mussulmans only are employed on salaries over Rs. 100 per mensem."[1] Muslim failure to qualify for public service was not so much due to their aversion to English education, but to the historic tradition of Muslim rulers of employing Hindus in the administration.[2] Despite this acknowledgement of Muslim exclusion from education and employment, the Government felt it was unable to recommend any special measures for them. Erskine, the Commissioner of Sind, made rather original comments and tried to prove that in Sind Muslims still retained "a very large share of better class appointments."[3] On the contrary, Collector of Shikarpur reported that in Khairpur, "hardly any of the work of what passes for administration is confided to them."[4] Giving his own reasons for Muslim exclusion from Government employment he made a startling observation. Since Hindu civilization was much older than Islam, and that "the ancestors of our Hindu officials were engaged in trade or administration when those of even the Sayyads were camel-drivers, and the indigenous races, converted to Islam were the rudest and most ignorant, such as our Jats and Muhanas." Naturally Muslims were unable to produce men of administrative aptitude and training, and even the Mughal Emperors had to depend on Hindu officials for their administration. Going a step further he concluded, "... the greater part of the Mussulmans of India are by race unfitted for the steady application which we require of all subordinates," and the common belief that Muslims were "manly and more suited for outdoor work than the Hindus,"[5] had no basis in fact. These observations betrayed a deep anti-Muslim bias which though startling was by no means rare, and reflected the thinking of a class of officers who were directly concerned with the dispensation of state patronage at lower levels.

Justice Melvill commented that excluding Sind, Muslims were in small numbers and most of them consisted of Khojas and Memons, "whose rules of inheritance are of Hindu origin."[6] They were governed

1. Gonne to the Secretary to the Govt. of India, *Ibid.*, p. 414.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Erskine, Commissioner in Sind, to H. E. the Governor in Council, Bombay, 2 August, 1882, *Ibid.*, p. 418.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 419
6. Minute by the Hon'ble Justice Melvill, *Ibid.*, p. 424.

by customary law and Hindu usage. Since questions of Muslim Law did not arise, the appointment of Muslim Law Officers would be nothing better than making provision for sinecures. Bayley endorsed these views and repudiated the allegations of miscarriage of justice due to the lack of proper knowledge of Muslim Law as "absolutely false and groundless."[1]

Chatfield, Director of Public Instructions held that the Muslims "never had the same political position in Western India that they enjoyed in Hindustan."[2] Erskine, also pointed out that in Western India, the British succeeded the Hindus, not the Muslims, and their prospects of employment were far better under the British Government than had ever been under the Hindu rulers.[3] Chatfield stated that the trading class of Muslims had been "largely benefited by British rule,"[4] and the Memons had outstriped the Parsis in some branches of business. The Muslim element was insignificant in civil appointments, as illustrated from the figures of officials drawing more than Rs. 30 as pay.[5]

Christians	Hindus	Parsis	Mussalmans	Total
70	796	68	48	982

As the Government was anxious to induce the Muslims to educate themselves, it applied special rules in Sind where the mosque schools were given larger grant than had been usual for vernacular schools. A grant of Rs. 6,000 was made to Anjuman-i-Islam for an Anglo-Hindustani school, and the Bombay Municipality gave an additional grant of Rs. 5,000 for primary education to the Anjuman.[6] Endorsing the Memorial the Government of Bombay recommended that Education Commission could be enlarged to consider the question of Muslim education adequately.

The Muslim leaders and organisations of Bombay did not agree with the official view, and in their evidence before the Education Commission took up a line of argument which was in close accord with the Memorial. In this manner, the popular nature of the demands and opinions of the Association were vindicated, and the official attempts to portray it as an unrepresentative body were discredited. Since no better and freer means of expression or organisation, except those adopted by the Association, were available to the peoples of India in the political setup of 1882, the official objections to the generally representative character of the Associa-

1. Minute by the Hon'ble Justice Bayley, *Ibid.*, p. 425.
2. Chatfield to the Chief Secretary Govt. of Bombay, Educational Deptt., 11 May 1882; *Ibid.*, p. 422.
3. Erskine to H. E. Governor of Bombay in Council, *Ibid.*, p. 419.
4. Chatfield to the Chief Secretary Govt. of Bombay, *Ibid.*, p. 422.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*

tion was nothing short of political sophistry. Muslim leaders of Bombay fully agreed with the Memorial that general Muslim poverty was inhibiting their progress. Ghulam Muhammad Munshi[1] affirmed that "Mussalmans are very poor comparatively, and cannot afford to educate their children."[2] Rehmat Ullah Sayani,[3] regarded, "the general poverty of the Mussalmans"[4] as one of the principal causes of Muslim backwardness in Muslim primary education in Bombay. Badruddin Tyabji testified, that in case of Muslims "ignorance and poverty have now become almost a danger to the State and for which it has become imperatively necessary to provide a remedy."[5] The Anjuman-i-Islam, which drew its inspiration from Badruddin Tyabji, submitted a memorandum to the Education Commission, and observed that the benefits of progress were shared by the Hindus, Parsis and Christians who predominated in schools, the colleges, "the liberal professions, or the Government services." But in comparison, "that community which only a short time ago was ruling India from one end to the other, has not only not progressed, but has actually been thrown back, and has now reached a depth of ignorance, poverty, distress and degradation which, unless speedily remedied, cannot fail to be a danger to the state."[6] It reads like the Memorial. The Anjuman-i-Tahzib of Bombay also submitted a memorial endorsing these views.

Regarding primary education, Ghulam Muhammad Munshi observed that it had "not been placed on a sound basis and is not capable of development up to the requirements of the community.[7] Complaining that the primary education of Muslims was "in a very backward state," Rehmat Ullah Sayani remarked:

> The proportion of Muhammadan pupils in the schools in Bombay to the Muhammadan population is very small.[8]

Badruddin Tyabji commented that "no system at all has been adopted with reference to the requirements of the Mussulman community,"[9] and the Government policies were no less responsible for the present state of affairs. Lee Warner, a member of the Commission, tried to refute Badar-

1. He made valuable contribution to the cause of Muslim education in Bombay and was one of the founder members of Anjuman-i-Islam, Bombay.

2. *Bombay Education Commission Report*, Vol. II, p. 318.

3. An eminent public figure who later became the president of All India Congress.

4. *Bombay Education Commission Report*, Vol. II, p. 458.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

6. 'Memorials relating to the Bombay Education Commission, *Ibid.*, p. 11.

7. *The Bombay Education Commission Report*, Vol. II, p. 316.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 458.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 497.

uddin Tyabji's argument and placed before the Commission a comparative table representing the proportion[1] of educated Muslims and Muslim students *vis-a-vis* Hindus of the same category, in various Divisions of Bombay. However, he did not reveal the source of his information:

Name	Muslim Percentage	Hindu Percentage
Bombay Island	19	17.6
Northern	9	7
Central	8.7	4.1
N. East	8.7	4.1

On his admission Muslims were lagging behind Hindus in Southern Division, and in Sind they were "entirely illiterate," but he insisted that these figures were a "marked improvement"[2] in the Muslim community. Badruddin Tyabji challenged Lee Warner's statistical manipulation who instead of acknowledging Muslim backwardness had even established their lead over the Hindus in Bombay proper. Badruddin Tyabji presented before the Commission, figures of Muslim students learning English and attending various high schools and colleges in different Divisions. His figures were more reliable as they were drawn from the Report of the Director of Public Instructions, for 1880-81:

Name	No. of Muslims	Total No. of Students
Bombay City	220	6,735
Central	307	9,586
North East	39	977
Northern	182	4,459
Southern	62	2,801
Sind	795	19,965

In high education the Muslim position was reflected in the following figures:

Name of Institution	No. of Muslims	Total No. of Students
Deccan College	Nil	133
Elphinstone College	5	175
Ahmadabad College	Nil	25
St. Xavier's College	1	71
General Assembly's Institution	Nil	85
Government Law College	3	152
Grant Medical College	3	282
Poona Engineering College	5	159

1. *Ibid.*, p. 507.
2. *Ibid.*

And what was more significant, that during the 23 years from 1859 to 1881, out of 15,247 candidates who passed the matriculation examination only 48 Muslims.[1] In his appraisal of Muslim education, Lee Warner was as far off from objectivity as Erskine was in his evaluation of Muslim share in the state patronage in Sind. Without any fear of official rebuff Badruddin Tyabji repudiated the Government's professions of sympathy for Muslims. His evidence was corroborated by Khan Bahadur Kazi Shahabuddin, who submitted that the "Hindus in Government and aided schools bore the proportion of 1 to 61 of the entire Hindu population, while the Muhammadans were 1 to 117,"[2] If the untouchables were excluded from Hindus as they were in fact excluded from Hindu society, the Hindu proportion worked out still better. He pointed out that of Muslim students receiving education in Government and aided institutions 25,240 were in primary schools, 647 were in the middle schools, and only 17 in the colleges, making a total of 25,904. On this basis he worked out the following table.[3]

Institutions	Hindus	Muhammadans
Primary Schools	1 in 61 of the entire Hindu population.	1 in 117
Middle Class and High Schools	1 in 1,224 in entire Hindu population	1 in 4,669
Colleges	1 in 9,756 in the entire Hindu population.	1 in 177,706

These figures included Muslim population of Sind, which if taken separately would show that the position of Muslims of Sind was "truly alarming." There were 390,000 Muslims and 69,000 Hindus in Karachi district, yet there was one Hindu in 25, and one Muslim in 350 in Government and aided institutions. He cited these figures to prove that despite Government efforts education "has made no progress—has taken no root"[4] among Muslims during the last sixty years. He affirmed that:

> The principal cause is the attitude of the Government and their officers towards the Muhammadans. I feel no hesitation in saying that, that attitude has been one of apathy. I am not aware of any Government of Bombay which has considered the condition of the Muhammadan population from a statesman's point of view, while

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Statements—Bombay Education Commission Report*, p. 55.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
4. *Ibid.*

> district officers have confined themselves to the sphere of executive functions prescribed for them, passively looking on the phenomenon of 30 lakhs of people under their rule gradually sinking into ignorance and poverty.[1]

Not more than forty years had elapsed that Muslims of Sind were an enlightened and affluent community, but now under British rule had been reduced to dust.

The local Muslim leaders were unanimous in attributing Muslim backwardness in education to a large extent to the lack of Urdu education in Bombay. Rehmat Ullah Sayani argued that Muslims of "limited means"[2] were excluded from education since Urdu was not taught in the primary schools even though it had been recognised as a Muslim vernacular in 1875. This undermined the usefulness and popularity of education in the eyes of Muslims who valued their old classical disciplines. For Badruddin Tyabji, the one great reason of the unsoundness of educational system in Bombay was, that there existed no arrangements for the teaching of Urdu and Persian which the Muslims prized. He pleaded for a special consideration of Muslim "feelings and ideas"[3] with regard to Urdu. For some years, the Anjuman-i-Islam had been making efforts to employ Urdu as medium of instruction at school level, but its programme could not be extended due to limited finances. Repeatedly, the Anjuman had brought to the Government's notice, "the absurdity of compelling Muhammadan boys either to remain ignorant of Western literature altogether or to learn Guajrati or Marathi in order to acquire a knowledge of English".[4] Strangely enough the authorities were still not convinced that the best interests of Muslim education would be served by opening schools "where English education might be imparted through the medium of Hindustani, which is the mother tongue of the Mahomedan India as a body."[5] Badruddin Tyabji questioned:

> Why should not Muhammadan languages, for instance, be recognized by Government? Why should they be supplanted by other and inferior dialects? Why should Muhammadan literature be practically excluded from schools and colleges.[6]

In vindicating Urdu as the national language of Muslims of Bombay, Badruddin Tyabji stood along with Sir Syed and Ameer Ali on the common

1. *Ibid.*
2. *The Bombay Education Commission Report*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 458.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 497.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 504.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*

platform of Muslim national consciousness. Khan Bahadur Kazi Shahabuddin testified, while Hindus and Parsis who could avail of educational facilities in Gujrati and Marathi languages no corresponding facilities were provided to Muslims for education in Urdu. Stressing the cultural significance of Urdu for those Muslims who did not speak it as a mother tongue, he pointed out that Muslims were so deeply attached to it that they would never "consent to discard it in favour of any other vernacular." For them, "Urdu, together with Persian and Arabic, forms a group of languages in which the whole of the Mahomedan religious and secular literature exists." He argued, it would be unwise to refuse "to comply with their requirements,"[1] and to persist in rejecting Urdu as medium of instruction for Muslims.

Muslim exclusion from employment was not the result of educational policy only, but of political factors as well. The replacement of Muslim power in Sind brought about "sudden and wholesale changes"[2] like the substitution of Hindi for Persian. Analysing the traumatic exclusion of Muslims from state patronage during the last twenty years, Khan Bahadur Kazi Shahabuddin averred:

> In Sind the process has been sharp and decisive. In the older districts it has been gradual, but nonetheless certain.[3]

Muslim exclusion "from Government patronage is almost complete",[4] he commented and repudiated the stereotyped plea that qualified Muslims were not available. In turn, he posed the question to those who retailed this specious argument, whether they were really certain that no qualified Muslims were available, and was the official patronage being really extended to those who were qualified.[5] Only Government action could save the situation, otherwise Muslims had little hope of "any fair play or even compassion, from the family cliques and caste leagues which have hitherto enjoyed monopolies of official patronage."[6] His observations were applicable not only to Bombay, but were true of Muslims in "other parts of India, such as Madras, the Berars, and the Central Provinces."[7]

Badruddin Tyabji remonstrated that educated Muslims had to face "the greatest possible difficulty in finding remunerative employment either under the Government or otherwise." From his personal knowledge he could testify that several Muslim University graduates from good families

1. *Statements—Bombay Education Report*, *Ibid.*, p. 57.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

could not obtain any employment despite "strenuous efforts on their behalf by men of influence and position." It was his considered opinion that "political prejudices"[1] were mainly responsible for shutting out Muslims from public employment. The rejection of Muslims well qualified in Persian and Arabic was another contributory cause. He refuted the allegation that, "as a body, Muhammadans are wanting in ability," and asserted, "wherever they have made their appearance they have shown themselves quite capable of holding their own."[2] So far Muslims had not received their due share in state patronage. There had been Hindu, Parsi, and European Sheriffs of Bombay, but never a Muslim. Was it not tragic that not even one educated Muslim had been fit for such a sinecure. He asked the question:

> Why should not the claims of Muslims to state patronage be recognised in the same manner as the claims of other communities?[3]

All the Muslim leaders of Bombay agreed that only exceptional treatment could produce a change in the exceptionally poor condition of their community. Ghulam Muhammad Munshi, made a number of proposals for the improvement of courses of instruction and administration. As Muslim parents were too poor to bear the expenses of their children's education, special scholarships and rewards, and low rates of fee should be made available to them.[4] Although suggestions of exceptional treatment for Muslims were not appreciated by those who did not know the circumstances of Muslim community, there were a good reason for it. Muslims had been "forsaken for more than half a century, and had been left behind their countrymen in the race of education." He observed:

> It will now require about half a century for them to overtake their beaters. So whatever may now be spent on regenerating the true believers of the Presidency will make up for their past loss. Moreover, I should say that it is an irrecoverable loss to them; what others have gained during the past 58 years.[5]

Badruddin Tyabji pleaded for a fair and impartial distribution of state patronage.[6] It was the duty of the Government to provide Muslim youth with suitable education, which should be a part of the general system of education, on the lines of education for Gujrati and Marathi speaking

1. *The Bombay Education Commission Report*, p. 499.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 503.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 504.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 316-17.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 504.

boys.[1] For 160,000 Muslim population of Bombay city "*it is, therefore, not asking for more than justice, if the expenditure on the education of Mussalmans should at least be in proportion to their numbers, if not in proportion to their requirements.*"[2] Thus he enunciated an important principle that Muslims should draw benefits both from state patronage and state expenditure, in proportion to their population. His thinking was not only in line with Ameer Ali and the CNMA, but even ahead of them. Enlarging his premise regarding Government responsibility, he held that "in the present backward state of India, the whole responsibility of educating the people of India must fall upon the State." If self-government was to be extended to the people of this country, it was imperative that they be properly educated so that they could take "a more active part in the administration of their own country."[3] But in any extended state responsibility, Muslim education should be considered as a matter of first priority, otherwise the political consequences would be harmful both for the Government and Muslims. He sounded a note of warning.

> The ignorance of Muhammadans must lead to their poverty, and their poverty to discontent, and no thoughtful politician would deny that the discontent of such a large community as the Mussalmans of India would be a grave source of danger to the State, and ought to be removed at all cost and without delay.[4]

These words were an echo of the Memorial. Badruddin Tyabji's ideas were shared by the Muslim organizations of Bombay. The Anjuman-i-Tahzib in its memorial suggested that, Muslims who were well versed in Muslim languages and literature even if they did not possess English education, should be accepted for Government service. To enlarge Muslim participation, the rule debarring persons above the age of 25 years from Government employment should be waived in case of Muslim candidates.[5] The Anjuman-i-Islam urged the Government to adopt measures which should enable the Muslims to make up for their lost time, and that no expenditure should be considered too great to remove the causes of discontent which could become "a standing menace to the security of the Empire."[6]

Testifying before the Commission on 31 October, 1882 in Bombay, Khan Bahadur Kazi Shahab-ud-din observed that since Hunter's book

1. *Ibid.*, p. 505.
2. *Ibid.*, (Italics by the present author).
3. *Ibid.*, p. 500.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 505.
5. *Memorials—Bombay Education Commission Report*, p. 15.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

the position of Muslims had not changed. Though Hunter had portrayed the misery of Muslims of Bengal, those descriptions could be applied "with equal truth and force to the Muhammadan population of the whole British India."[1] He raised Tyabji's argument, regarding Muslim share of state expenditure according to their requirements if not according to their numbers, to the level of political dialectics. He formulated two fundamental principles for deciding the desirability or otherwise of exceptional treatment for the Muslims of India. Firstly, "what *special* action the Government be legitimately expected to take in the matter," and secondly "what share can the Muhammadans legitimately *claim* of official patronage."[2] He did not amplify the first principle, since its application was pre-determined by the very polity of British Indian Empire. He had no illusions on this point. But the second principle was subject to a wider interpretation, whereby political action taken by Muslims for the sake of acquisition of their just rights could be considered legal. Legitimate Muslim rights were defined on the basis of Muslim population in relation to other communities. Since the ratio of Hindu and Muslim population was 1 to 4, it should form the real basis of distribution of state patronage between them. Muslim population in relation to all other Indian communities stood in proportion of 1 to 4.5, and as such they could legitimately claim one place while five were given to all the others. He wanted a Government ruling on these lines, with necessary concession in matter of educational qualifications as a temporary measure.[3]

If policies could be changed by reason and logic alone, Kazi Shahab-ud-Din's argument would have proved most effective. Nevertheless, his ideas did represent higher thinking on the issues raised by the Memorial, and in some respects stand out as a culmination of the political views fostered by the Association. Notwithstanding its dialectical sharpness, this being a private statement, cannot be considered at par with the evidence of Badruddin Tyabji which aroused greater interest among the Muslims of Bombay.

The Government of the Punjab had a better case to present. Since Urdu, was already the court language of the province, no defence was needed.[4] Muslim endowments were small, and did not call for Governments action. Since the local Muslims preferred their cases to be decided

1. *Statements—Bombay Education Commission Report*, p. 55.
2. *Ibid.* p. 61.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Young to Mackenzie, 19 April, 1883, *India Home Proceeding* (*Education*). 1885, p. 458.

on the basis of custom, the Sharia Law had been subordinated to the customary law.[1] So there was no need for the employment of Qazis. But the official view was not endorsed by Muslim members of the Senate of the Punjab University, and eminent Sunni Maulvis.[2] They pleaded that Muslims were generally backward in education but their backwardness became more marked north of the Sutlej.[3] In 1881-82, Muslim percentage in all kinds of educational institutions was 37.9, which though showed a slight increase, was still inadequate. Muslim absence from high school education was more serious.[4] For some years, Muslim members of the Senate of the Punjab University had been urging the Government to render financial aid to the cause of Muslim education by offering special scholarships and stipends to Muslim students.[5] But the Government expressed its inability to do anything likely to create doubts about its impartiality, and suggested that it was the obligation of Muslim community to establish such scholarships by public subscription.[6]

The Government of the Punjab, claimed that the British rule did not impose any disabilities on Muslims, but in fact had freed them "from a thraldom which placed them in a position inferior to the Hindus." If the Muslims had failed to avail of the benefits of the British raj, "the blame must lie on their own door, and for the future the remedy lies in their own hands."[7] Going a step further, the Government cited figures to prove that Muslims enjoyed a fair share of state patronage. In the administrative and judicial appointments there were 141 Muslims as against 171 Hindus, and the number of Muslim Extra Assistant Commissioners was larger than that of the Hindus. But in fact, English qualifications were not compulsory for certain appointments so Muslims did enjoy a favourable position in a few departments otherwise they were insignificant in departments requiring technical education or training. Nevertheless, the Government concluded that considering the comparative fitness of Hindus and Muslims it would be evident that "an undue share of state partonage has been bestowed upon the Muhammadan section of the community."[8]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 461.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 475-78.
3. Holroyd to The Junior Secretary to the Govt. of Punjab, 28 September 1882. *Ibid.*, p. 469.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 470.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 476.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 460.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 461.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 459-60.

These official claims were contradicted by Haji Ghulam Hussain, member of the Education Commission. He asserted that the Government offices were practically a Hindu monopoly, "...Indeed it is pitiful to see the hosts of Dasses and Parasads, Kishens and Rams filling all the Government posts, while hardly any Muhammadan is to be seen."[1] Hindu preponderance could have been justified when no qualified Muslims were available, but now it was unjust to continue ignoring the educated Muslims. In order to make the number of Muslims proportionate with the Hindus, the Government should give preference to Muslim candidates having qualifications equal with others. Since Hindus had been using their influence to keep out the Muslims from Government employment, "and almost all of them were governed by religious prejudice,"[2] it was imperative to rectify the chronic imbalance through exceptional treatment for Muslims.

The Anjuman-i-Hamdardi Islamia, Lahore challenged the official professions of impartial treatment and questioned the wisdom of such a policy.

> To prescribe the same medicine to two persons suffering from two different diseases, and having different temperaments, and having different circumstances, is a kind of tyranny and strongheadedness on the part of the Government.[3]

Since Muslims formed the majority in the agriculturist population of the Punjab, it was "the greatest injustice and unfairness that the greater part of what is taken from the pocket of those poverty-stricken fellows be expended in educating the rich Khatris, Banyas, and Brahmins of those towns where the Municipalities have given very little for the support of colleges and schools."[4] The Anjuman invoked the principles of financial equity to justify Muslim claims to exceptional treatment. It was axiomatic they argued, that those people had the first right on the revenues who had contributed to them the most by their economic activity. In this context, Muslim cause coincided "with the cause of the agriculturist,"[5] and the demand that more money should be spent on his education to enable him to come up to the standard of those who for long had been benefiting from the fruits of his labour, was irrefutable logic and a fair demand. To clinch the argument, they said that if special treatment was right for the Eurasians, how could it be wrong for Muslims. They

1. *Report of the Education Commission, Punjab*, p. 117.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
3. *Some Muslim Evidence—before the Punjab Education Commission, Ibid.*, p. 139.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

emphasized the "good political results"[1] of special treatment, and also presented a memorial bearing 9,963 signatures of Hindus and Muslims, in favour of Urdu.[2]

The Anjuman-i-Islamya, Lahore dealt with the issues raised in the Memorial in detail. The Memorial was translated, printed, and circulated to the various Anjumans and influential Muslims, and the "substance of the opinions received"[3] were carefully formulated. In general, the Anjuman confirmed the plaints of Muslim deprivation in paras 3, 5, 6 and 13 of the Memorial. Although in the Punjab Muslims formed 60 percent of the population, their condition was "much worse and more pitiable".[4] Since for political reasons several Muslims had been appointed as Extra Assistant Commissioners in the frontier areas, their comparatively larger number was not the true index of overall Muslim employments. The Anjuman presented a comparative table showing that there were 1,957 Hindus, 811 Muslims and 316 Christians in the offices of Deputy Commissioners of Delhi, Lahore and Peshawar "where the Muslims predominate over the general population."[5] Once again, the Government statistics were challenged. No where did the Muslims accept the Governments' figures, neither in Bengal and Bombay, nor in the Punjab. Unmistakably, Muslims all over the country looked upon official statistics to be suspect and manipulated. The Anjuman highlighted Muslim exclusion from public service, and to lend emphasis even quoted a line from the Memorial, "with every avenue to every public employment..."[6] The conditions were not different in the Punjab where the intentions of the Viceroy regarding the impartial distribution of State patronage were being "treated as a dead letter." Muslim graduates instead of receiving some special favours were being excluded in the Punjab, and "the Anjuman bitterly complains of this circumstance."[7]

That poverty and ignorance of Muslim Bengal sprang mainly from the Resumption Proceedings, was fully endorsed by the Anjuman. Since Muslim educational system in Bengal and the Punjab was "almost entirely supported by rent-free grants," it received a "death blow"[8] as a result of the Resumption Proceedings. Delineating deprivation of Punjabi

1. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
2. *Memorials—The Punjab Education Commission Report*, p. 576.
3. The Secretary Anjuman-i-Islamya to the Under Secretary Govt. of Punjab, 1 August 1882, *India Home Proceedings* (*Education*), p. 486.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 487.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 488.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 487.

Muslims, the Anjuman pointed out that the Memorial had failed to depict Muslim poverty "in its true colour," which in fact was "manifold greater than the memorial attempts to describe."[1] Boldly the Anjuman diagnosed that the real cause of their malaise was unquestioning loyalty. The Anjuman expounded:

> "The Muhammadan silently acquiesced in all administrative changes that were detrimental to their interests without protest, and instead of loyally demanding that justice should be done to their rights, which had escaped the attention of the Government, entirely depended on the expectation that Government would itself make arrangements for them."[2]

Unqualified Muslim submission was misconstrued as a sign of satisfaction by the Government and as a result Muslim "position continued to grow worse and worse."[3] Now it was the duty of the Government to help that section of its loyal subjects which had been "reduced to penury for scarcely any fault of its own."[4] Special treatment for Muslims was justified for "both laws of humanity and political reasons." If special provisions for Eurasian education were in conformity with the Statute of 1833 and the Royal Proclamation of 1858, how could similar arrangements for Muslims who were far more deserving than the Eurasians, be considered as an infringement of the law.[5]

The Anjuman was "at one with the Memorialists in thinking that the abolition of the offices of Qazis and Muftis has seriously injured the prospects of the Muhammadans, not only of Bengal but of the Punjab also." The nomination of Qazis in certain parts of the province under the Act XII of 1881 was a half-measure as the Anjuman rightly pointed out that mere nomination "without powers to act, cannot remove the grievance complained by the memorialists."[6] The Qazis should be paid officers and should be consulted on questions of Muslim Personal Law. Following the precedent of Allahabad High Court, the Government should appoint competent Muslims as Judges to the various High Courts of the country. The Anjuman also endorsed the Memorial regarding the appointment of a special Commission to study the state of Muslim education.

Large scale hardships and misery inflicted on the Muslims of Bihar, by the substitution of Hindi script for Urdu, as portrayed in the Memorial,

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 488.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 489.

were painfully endorsed by the Anjuman which alerted the Government about the spread of Hindi agitation in the Punjab. This agitation, calculated to give "a death blow to the prospects of the Muhammadans," had been "raised by some *foreigners*, and joined by designing and 'prejudiced'...Hindus."[1] They had "through their emissaries spread the revolutionary movement throughout the length and breadth of the Province." The Anjuman warned that "the agitation is a blow maliciously aimed at the Muhammadans—aye, it is directed against the whole Punjab, and is calculated to do mischief which centuries will not be able to repair."[2] Representing the Punjabi Muslims, the stout champions of Urdu, the Anjuman urged the Government to restore Urdu script in Bihar.[3] In this manner the Anjuman popularized, supported and enlarged the Memorial.

The cooperation between the Anjuman and the CNMA was more than symbolic, in fact it was the sense of common grievance and common purpose which had united the Muslims of Bengal with the Muslims of Punjab. A new fervour had begun to stir Muslims all over India. William H. Gregory, the Governor of Ceylon, who toured the N. W. Provinces in 1882, witnessed signs of a widespread enthusiasm among the Muslims who endorsed the Memorial of CNMA to him.[4] By setting a national goal, the CNMA strengthened the bonds which united together Muslims, from Peshawar to Madras, and from Bombay to Calcutta, and stirred them to an awareness of their common political destiny. Very confidently, Ameer Ali upheld the oneness of Muslim nation in South Asia, when Syed Mahmud a member of the Education Commission asked him the following question :

> Q.—From your knowledge of your co-religionists of other parts of India than Bengal and Behar, will you kindly state whether the Muhammadans as a people are homogeneous enough to make your observations applicable in their main principles to the Muhammadans of other parts of India also?
>
> A.—Decidedly so.[5]

The Memorial had thus served a larger cause of Muslim nationalism.

Ameer Ali and the Memorial

Ameer Ali continued his exertions to obtain recognition of the de-

1. *Ibid.* p. 488.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 489.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Sir William Gregory, *The Nineteenth Century, 1886*, Vol. XX, p. 893.
5. *Bengal Education Commission Report*, p. 223.

mands embodied in the Memorial. He acquainted the Association of the attitude taken by the Government of Bengal. The Association reaffirmed the Memorial in its general meeting on 15 April 1883, and complained that in matter of distribution of state patronage Muslims "were labouring virtually under a political ostracism...the present number of Mahomedan employees in the service of State, was utterly disproportionate to their numbers and importance as a community."[1] Taking notice of those Muslims who had "assailed" the suggestions of the Association for the amelioration of Muslims, and had "endeavoured to justify the degradation of the community, be questioning the motives of your leading members," the Association regretted "the tactics of a small faction opposed to the Association, as well as to the general interests of the community."[2] Obviously it was a rejoinder to Nawab Abdul Latif's *Memorandum*. But above all, the official attitude caused greater concern to the Association.

The Education Commission claimed to have made its recommendations on Muslim education "not merely with a regard to justice, but with a leaning towards generosity."[3] The Government of India considered the conclusions and recommendations of the Education Commission, and elicited the comments of the Provincial governments as well. Finally, the Government of India drafted its Resolution on the basis of cumulative data. Ripon gave a copy of the draft Resolution to Ameer Ali for his opinion. Explaining his objections to the Resolution, Ameer Ali once again underscored the representative character of the Association which had formulated its demands on the basis of the "feelings and hopes of our community" transmitted through branch Associations "in almost every important station in Northern India and in Bombay and Madras." He claimed to possess "the fullest confidence" of his co-religionists, and informed the Government that the publication of the Resolution in its existing form "will have a disastrous effect on the Mahomedans throughout the country."[4] The language of the Resolution should also be modified otherwise Muslims would be deeply disappointed and it was not unlikely that their "growing confidence"[5] in the Government might take a different turn. Since the Memorial typified Muslim national demand, and had been widely translated and published in "almost all the vernacular newspapers of Northern India, Madras and Bombay," every section of the

1. *Quinquennial Report*, pp. 10-11.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 11
3. *Education Commission Report*. Calcutta, 1883, p. 505.
4. *Ameer Ali to Primrose*, 10 March 1884, *Correspondence in India, RC.*
5. *Ibid.*

Muslim community was anxiously waiting for a favourable reply.[1]

Once again, refuting Government's contention regarding the fairness of the Resumption Proceedings, he vindicated the position he had taken in the Memorial and in *The Nineteenth Century*. He dispelled the inspired doubts about his facts and figures, which he asserted had been drawn from the Records of Survey conducted by Montgomery Martin in 1838, and supplemented by the traditions still extant among local Muslims. The reports complied by Khan Bahadur Maulvi Abdul Jabbar of Bankipur, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Iqbal Ali of Gonda, and Muslims of Gaya lent further support to his argument set forth in the Memorial.[2] As the Government was determined to disown all responsibility for Muslim deprivation in any form which could have put it under obligation for its redress, the controversy about the Resumption Proceedings was not an academic exercise but a political issue.

He again solicited Government help to improve the administration of *waqfs* which were being misused by private individuals not amenable to any moral pressure of the community. He pointed out that the French Government was helping its Muslim subjects to organise their Endowments. In Turkey the *waqfs* were being utilized for educational purposes, and the same could be done profitably by the British Government.[3]

He took exception to the official view that "blame cannot be attributed to the action of the State or its officers", if Muslims secured less jobs in comparison with other communities since suitably educated Muslims were not available. Ameer Ali cited the cases of qualified Muslims who despite their efforts had been denied opportunities of Government service.[4] The gap between the Hindus and Muslims was widening progressively in every sphere of state patronage, and as such Government's professions of a fair deal for Muslims were merely hypothetical.

Substantiating his argument by facts he retorted, "A few facts are worth all the theories in the world." In 1872 the proportion of Muslims to Hindus, in the Gazetted appointments in Bengal was 7 to 1, in 1882 it was 10 to 1, and in 1884 it had fallen to 12 to 1. There were only 14 Muslims as against 288 Hindus in the Subordinate Judicial service, 29 Muslims in relation to 200 Hindus in the Subordinate Executive Service.[5] He argued:

The unequal distribution of State patronage is the most important

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

> question of all; it has given rise to the greatest of bitterness of feeling and discontent, and will continue to do so unless the Government of India emphatically lays down the principle that in Bengal at least one-third of State employment should be reserved for the Mahommedans.[1]

The definition of Muslim share in the public service was a fair enough demand, but the Government hedged behind its favourite facade of impartiality. Ameer Ali, strongly denounced this policy.

> To reduce all the various races of India for the purpose of employment to a dead level of equality will, I may be allowed to say, lead to enormous injustice, and prejudice the cause of good government.[2]

The "erroneous impression" conveyed by the Government of Bengal that Muslims of Calcutta alone were opposed to the substitution of Hindi for Urdu in Bihar, was effectively countered by him. He assured the Government of India that he had personally ascertained the feelings of the Bihari Muslims who "as a body, strongly opposed the change lately introduced on purely sentimental grounds by the Government of Bengal."[3] Since most of the members of the Association belonged to Bihar, the Association could not have but represented their grievance truly.

In another letter, he reminded the Government of India of the desirability of having separate school boards and inspecting officers for Muslim schools, otherwise Muslims would be subjected to a good deal of petty oppression," like the blocking of Municipal funds for Muslim education.[4] He had already taken up this question with the Government of Bengal. Ameer Ali's frantic letters to Ripon were of no avail in altering the preconceived course of Government policy.

On 16 April 1884, Ripon accepted the recommendations of the Education Commission regarding Muslim education,[5] and made them available to the CNMA. The Committee of the Association examined these recommendations in its meeting on 22 April 1884. Although the recommendations fell short of their "requirements," they still expected some useful results if "carried out fully by the Local Governments."[6] Reiterating the arguments, already set forth in the Memorial and in of Ameer Ali's letters, the Committee expressed its concern that Muslims were being "gradually crowded off from public employments." It was "an unpleasant task to

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Ameer Ali to Primrose, 12 March 1884, *Ibid.*
5. Note by the Viceroy, 16 April 1884, on the Recommendations of the Education Commission, *Ibid.*
6. *Quinquennial Report*, p. 80.

harp on the evils of a system of administration, from which educated Mussulmans, who only about a century ago were the ruling race of India, *and who yet constitute the only homogen ous nation in this country*, are steadily excluded."[1] A new tone of emphasis is added here. The Association could not "shut their eyes to the gravity of this evil," and promised to continue its "unceasing endeavour in the future...to obtain the due recognition from Government of the just and legitimate claims of their co-religionists."[2]

Only a few recommendations regarding the special measures for promotion of Muslim education were appreciated, otherwise the Association was not satisfied. Even if it had lost the battle, it had no alternative, but to accept the decision of the Government. Knowing full well that it possessed neither the strength nor the means to force the Government to change its unsympathetic policy towards the Muslims, the Association entertained no illusions of prestige, and did not launch any Quixotic attack on the giant of British authority in India. The Association still persevered to obtain some favourable modifications before the publication of the recommendations of the Education Commission as a formal Resolution. This was the last hope. Ameer Ali decided to bring the matter to the notice of the Secretary of State for India, and at the same time, decided to mobilize Muslim public opinion on the issue. He visited several cities for this purpose. Speaking in reply to an address of welcome at Karachi he emphasized the need for national unity.

> It has been my earnest endeavour to impress upon the Mahommedans the urgent necessity of union and co-operation in the work of that moral regeneration so essential to our political advancement.[3]

By a formal resolution, the Association authorised Ameer Ali to present their point of view before the Secretary of State for India. Sometimes in November 1884, Ameer Ali placed before Kimberly, the views of the Association on the newly designed policy of the Government of India on Muslim education. In reply, Kimberly informed him that he had seen only "the leading principles" of the education policy of the Government of India, "and that the details were left for further consideration." Kimberly promised however, to "mention the matter" to Ripon and his successor Dufferin. Kimberly advised Ripon to give explanations to Dufferin "on the point raised by Ameer Ali."[4] No tangible success was

1. *Ibid.*, p. 81, (Italics by the present author).
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Bengalee*, 13 September, 1884, IOL.
4. Kimberley to Ripon, 21 November, 1884, *RC. Add. M. S.* 43, 525 BM.

achieved except for the advantage that Dufferin, the Viceroy designate, became acquainted with the urgency of the problem of Muslim education. In his endeavour to take up the Muslim question with the Secretary of State for India in London, Ameer Ali devised a new political instrument and set up a precedent of political initiative not emulated till many years later by any other Muslim organization or leader. He was far ahead of the contemporary Muslim leadership in matters of political strategy.

Ripon could not finalize the recommendations on Muslim education and left this problem to his successor Dufferin. When Dufferin arrived in Bombay, in December 1884, the Anjuman-i-Islam, Bombay presented him an address of welcome inviting his attention to the consequences of the "poverty and decay" of the fifty million Muslims of India. They pointed out that "pressure of work had prevented Lord Ripon from dealing with the question," and now they looked upon him for support.[1] Dufferin in his reply, upheld the policy of equality and impartiality, but, promised to remove "any exceptional disabilities" which militiated against the progress of Muslims.[2] On Dufferin's arrival in Calcutta in January 1885, the Central National Mahomedan Association also presented him an address of welcome wishing him success in his endeavours to "ameliorate and improve the condition of the Mussalmans."[3] Urging special arrangements for Muslim education *Najm-ul-Akhbar* described Dufferin's reply to the address of the Association as "somewhat disappointing."[4] The signs were not very promising, but the Association was not daunted, and continued its efforts to secure modification of the draft Resolution. This was their last bid.

1. Dufferin, *Speeches in India*, London, 1890, pp. 22-24.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.
3. *The Indian Mirror*, 24 January 1885, IOL.
4. *Najm-ul-Akhbar*, 1 February 1885, *cited in NWPNNR.*, 1885, IOL.

CHAPTER VI

NEW POLICY ON MUSLIM EDUCATION

Dufferin completed the examination of the state of Muslim education and employment, initiated by Ripon in 1882. The recommendations of the Education Commission along with the comments of the provincial governments were considered by the Governor General in Council, and a Resolution on "Education of the Muhammadan community in British India and their employment in the public service generally."[1] was issued on 15 July 1885. The Governor General in Council asserted that the condition of Muslim education "taken as a whole is not altogether unsatisfactory,"[2] and controverted "various misconceptions"[3] which formed a part of the representations made to the Government on the subject. It was clarified that the recommendations of the Education Commission were "not of universal application."[4] The Government endorsed the views of the Education Commission that a distinct Oriental bias could not be imparted to Muslim education, but conceded that the subjects considered important by the parents could be given prominence. On the whole, the recommendations of the Education Commission found a limited and selective application in various provinces. The Governor General in Council examined the particular conditions of every province and accordingly mapped out the scope of new policy. In Madras, the "backward state of the Moplahs" was considered, and in the case of Sind "an urgent call for special measures" was recognised, and "a further examination of local wants"[5] was impressed upon the Government of Bombay. The Governor General in Council was satisfied that "very much has been done by the Local Government to meet the requirements of the Muhammadans in Bengal," and hoped that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal would if found necessary "not stint the necessary outlay,"[6] for Muslim education in any part of the province. The hostile opinions of that Lt.-Governor, so

1. *India Home Proceedings* (*Education*) 1885, pp. 531-50.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 542.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 549.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 540.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 541-42.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 542.

consistently repudiated by the Association, were non-endorsed without reservation by the Governor General in Council, and challenged:

> The Lieutenant-Governor, however, thinks that if it can be shown that in any locality the number of the Muhammadans who gain scholarships is not in due proportion to their numbers and position, a fair case will have been made out for exceptional, though he will also add temporary, treatment.[1]

How could Muslims of Bengal expect any sympathy or help from the intractable Lt.-Governor who had nullified even minor concessions by stiff conditions. The Resolution provided that if Muslims in their majority areas preferred Oriental teaching, "care must be taken to meet their wants," but their education should not be divorced from English education. The Governor General in Council confirmed that Muslim education and interests in the N. W. Provinces and Oudh were "duly attended to,"[2] and there was no need for special provisions. However the Local Government could determine the need for special measures where the number of Muslims was "unduly low in any grade of the educational course." In the Punjab no special measures were "thought to be called for." The Government of Central Provinces was advised to "keep a watchful eye on any localities where the Muhammadan population is large and backward."[3] As Muslims in Assam were not so poor and their vernacular was Bengali, adequate provision already existed for them. Muslims of Coorg and Berar also enjoyed sufficient provision for their education.[4]

The Governor General in Council preferred to dilute the recommendations of the Education Commission regarding the use of Urdu language as a medium of instruction in the case of Muslims. The Commission had recommended "that Hindustani be the principal medium for imparting instruction to Muhammadans in primary and middle schools,"[5] except in areas where they desired the adoption of some other language. The Commission had also stipulated "that in localities where Muhammadans form a fair proportion of the population, provision be made in middle and high schools maintained from public funds for imparting instruction in the Hindustani and Persian languages."[6] These recommendations very largely conceded Muslim demands, but the Governor

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 543.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 540.
6. *Ibid.*

General in Council scaled them down by subordinating their application to the discretion of Local Governments which, except for the Punjab Government, continued to use their local official vernaculars, and easily evaded responsibility in the matter. Madras Government was permitted to continue the local vernacular instead of Urdu, but the "special wants,"[1] of Muslims were to be met by the formation of Urdu classes in areas where the Muslims preferred the establishment of special schools.[2] The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal was assured that the Supreme Government had "no intention to reverse the decision of the Local Government in the matter of adoption of Hindi as the Court language of Bihar, and as the ordinary medium of instruction in the primary schools of that province."[3] Muslim demand for Urdu in Bihar was finally rejected and they were advised to make use of the current vernacular and keep in the main current of education.

Significantly, the Local and Central governments were more eager to curb any proposals which could be conducive to fostering a sense of separate cultural identity among the Muslims. The Government of Madras advised the Governor General in Council that "it is undesirable to accentuate the differences between Muhammadans and Hindus by making Hindustani in lieu of the current vernacular the medium of instruction,..."[4] Similarly the Government of Bengal was "not disposed to support the establishment of normal schools or classes for Muhammadan teachers exclusively. *Little is gained by such separatism*."[5] Endorsing these views, the Governor General in Council laid down:

> But equal care is necessary to prevent the absolute separation of the Muhammadan community from the rest of this population.[6]

In their own interest, Muslims of Bengal were asked to get acquainted with the local vernacular. Muslim cultural separatism was a disconcerting spactacle perhaps the Government feared it would snowball into a political movement and threaten the artificial Indian national unity. This belies the oft-repeated view that Muslim separatism was the product of British policy of *divide et impera*. In their struggle for the Memorial, Muslims were struggling for their cultural survival. Government policy was self-contradictory on the language issue, as on the one hand it endeavoured to

1. *Ibid.*, p. 541.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 542.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 541.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 542. (Italics by the present author).
6. *Ibid.*

impose educational uniformity for the sake of Indian national unity, but on the other hand it rejected Urdu as a common language and worked to nullify this aim by promoting provincial languages and local dialects. In this manner, the Government set into motion the forces which disrupted the emergent linguistic unity symbolized by Urdu—a legacy of the Muslim rule in the sub-continent.

The Local Governments were required to assign a special section to Muslim education in their annual reports, which "should be precise and detailed," and should also register local variations in the progress of Muslim education.[1] It would be advisable to make "a liberal provision of scholarships" to attract Muslims to higher education. The wants of Muslim community should "not to be over-looked in the framing of any general scheme of scholarships for any province."[2] In Bengal and in other localities where Muslims were backward, special Muslim Inspectors should be appointed not merely to inspect the primary schools, "but to inquire into Muhammadan education generally."[3]

Some relaxation in the qualifications for appointment of Munsif's and pleaders, was granted as it was "not absolutely necessary that a candidate should have graduated at a university or indeed have passed any university examination whatever,"[4] under the existing rules of the High Courts. The Local Governments were advised to accept candidates who had "passed some *public examination*"[5] equivalent to the First Arts Examination of the University. Nevertheless, they were advised to establish some examination which the High Courts could consider "as equivalent to the preliminary university test." The Governments of Bengal and Bombay were asked to make up for the deficiency of Muslims in the judicial service by recruiting suitably qualified Muslims.[6]

Regarding Muslim educational endowments in the provinces of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, N. W. Provinces, Oudh, and the Punjab, the Governor General in Council suggested the appointment of small committees consisting of few influential Muslims and Government officials. In Bengal the inquiry was expected "to take a wider range."[7] The local committees could be put in touch with their counter-

1. *Ibid.*, p. 543.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 544.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 547.

parts in other provinces. The Local Governments were given the authority to frame the rules and determine the scope of the committees in view of the "local circumstances."[1]

The Governor General in Council concurred with the reports of the Local Governments that the Memorialists had "exaggerated the numerical inferiority of the Muhammadans in the public service generally."[2] In their own interest, Muslims were advised not to seek exemption in competitive examinations or to claim any special favours. Though the Government could make no exceptions in its policy, in case of minor appointments Muslim claims could be considered. It was recommended:

> In those provinces where Muhammadans do not receive their full share of State employment, the Local Governments and High Courts will endeavour to redress this inequality as opportunity offers, and will impress upon subordinate officers the importance of attending to this in their selection of candidates for appointments of the class referred to. The subject of the extent to which Muhammadans are employed in offices under Government might usefully be noticed in the Annual Reports of Provincial administration.[3]

After the report of the Education Commission, appointment of a special commission to deal with the Muslim education was considered unnecessary. The Local governments were directed to take appropriate steps for the implementation of the policy laid down in the Resolution.

Generally, the role of the Association and the Resolution were well commented upon in the official and semi-official circles. The Education Commission observed, "of the various memorials...that have come before the Commission, by far the most important is that of National Muhammadan Association, whose headquarters are at Calcutta."[4] Johnston commented that the Memorial "assumed a kind of National significance."[5] Acknowledging its importance the Governor General in Council observed, "the very fact that a memorial like that under notice has been presented with the concurrence and approval of so many leading gentlemen in Bengal and elsewhere indicates that the Muhammadans have themselves come to appreciate fully the necessity of moving with the times."[6]

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *India Home Proceedings, (Education)*, p. 548.
4. *Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1885*, pp. 496-97.
5. *Abstract and Analysis of the Report of the Indian Education Commission*, London, 1884, cited, S. Ahmad., *op. cit.*, p. 28.
6. *India Home Proceedings (Education) 1885*, p. 550.

In the same vein, Dufferin wrote to Randolph Churchil, the Secretary of State, expressing his anxiety "to do something to give the Mahomedans a lift in the world,... who are being crowded out by the nimble-minded Bengalees." He had advised them "place their main reliance upon their own exertions," which was now "thoroughly understood." At last the Government of India had been "able to frame a Resolution the terms of which will both please them and make them feel that the Government has their interest at heart."[1] Dufferin had made a significant departure from the policy of calculated indifference towards Muslim progress, as was confirmed by later historians. Natson refers to it in these words:

> "Prior to Lord Minto's memorable reply to the Mahomedan deputation which waited on him at Simla on 1st October 1906, the most important declaration of policy emanating from the head of the Indian Government in regard to the Moslems, was the notable resolution issued by Lord Dufferin on the memorial of the Central National Mahomedan Association of Calcutta."[2]

A modern writer has described it as a "favourable resolution,"[3] and the Association deserved all the credit for having moved the Government of India in the matter.

Muslim View of the Resolution

Muslim reaction to the Resolution was a mixed one, praise tinged with frustration and bitterness. Syed Mahmud appreciated it:

> The resolution possesses the greatest importance in the history of Muhammadan education in India, as it contains the latest declaration of the policy of the Government on the subject and describes the main features of the points to which attention of the Government was directed in formulating that policy.[4]

Muslim press praised the Central National Mahomedan Association for analyzing the Muslim demands and obtaining redress however partial. But the Government was criticised for having failed to fulfil legitimate Muslim demands. *Rahbar-i-Hind* acclaimed the Association which had awakened Muslims and activated them for a policy of self-help.[5]

1. Dufferin to Randolph Churchil, 17 July, 1885, Letter No. 44., *DC.* Microfilm Reel No. 517, IOL.
2. G. A. Natsan, *Eminent Mussalmans*, Madras 1926, p. 149.
3. R. Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
4. Syed Mahmud, *History of English Education in India, (1781 to 1893). op. cit.*, p. 171.
5. *Rahbar-i-Hind*, Lahore, 14 March 1885, cited in *NWPNR.* 1885.

In a scathing criticism of the Resolution, *Shafiq-i-Hind* commented wryly "that a mountain is laboured and a mouse is born."[1] The Government took three long years to consider the Memorial but the Resolution "disappointed the whole Muhammadan Community."[2] *Rafi-ul-Akhbar* regretted that the Resolution did not stipulate any concessions for Muslims in public employment and had failed to re-establish Urdu as the official language in Bihar.[3] Toeing Sir Syed's line, *Rafiq-i-Hind* criticized the Association and read in the Resolution an apt reminder of policy of self help.[4] Despite these reservations, *Rafiq-i-Hind* was constrained to concede:

> The Muhammadan Association of Calcutta is entitled to the gratitude of the whole Muhammadan Community. At least the Memorial of the Association has served to bring the unsatisfactory condition of that community to the notice of the rulers.[5]

Najm-ul-Akhbar regretted that Dufferin "does not mean to do anything for them, although he professes so much sympathy for them. He is one of those men who talk to any extent but do nothing."[6] The papers reflected the frustration of Muslim nation. They had expected so much, but got so little.

In its private deliberations, the Association found the Resolution to be disappointing. Notwithstanding some marginal concessions, the Government showed no intention of modifying its policy on fundamental issues of Muslim education, and envisaged no comprehensive measures demanded by the Memorial. The Resolution did not enlarge areas of Muslim opportunity to any appreciable degree. The main demands: like Urdu in Bihar was rejected, and proportionate employment for Muslims by-passed. Clinging to administrative stereotypes, the policy makers neither entertained new ideas presented by the Association nor had the vision to rethink the question of employment as a whole. Consequently, the polarity between the Government policy and Muslim grievance remained unredressed. Since the recommendations of the Resolution were permissive rather than mandatory, the Local Governments could wield unlimited powers by way of discretion to enforce or hold in abeyance the operative clauses of the Resolution. The Governments of the Punjab

1. *Shafiq-i-Hind*, Lahore, 25 July 1885, cited in. *NWPNR*, 1885.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Rafi-ul-Akhbar*, Benares, 27 July 1885, cited in *Ibid.*
4. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, Lahore, 1 August 1885, cited in *Ibid.*
5. *Rafi-iq-Hind*, Lahore, 8 August 1885, cited in *Ibid.*
6. *Najm-ul-Akhbar*, Etawah, 20 August 1885, cited in *Ibid.*

and N. W. Provinces put off till 1888 the appointment of committees for the examination of Muslim endowments and then the matter was conveniently shelved. The Government of India did not create any new administrative apparatus for the enforcement of the Resolution, so the bureaucratic red tape continued to stifle Muslim progress. The customary checks like the submission of annual progress reports on Muslim education were worse than useless. It was not surprising, if some of the Local Governments successfully paralysed the Resolution by their delaying tactics, and administrative subterfuges. The hopes raised by the Resolution faded fast leaving the Muslims frustrated.

The Hindu View

The Memorialists had cited Hindus as a party. In this case if the Government was the base, Hindus and Muslims formed the other two sides of the triangle of Indian politics. Without reference to economic issues it would be an over simplification to attribute Hindu opposition to the Memorial only to religio-political antagonism. The educated Hindus justified their monopoly of Government employment as a fruit of their efforts, and reacted sharply to any proposal, like the Memorial, which implied diminution of their privileged position. Naturally Hindu elite took the lead in opposing the Muslim demands about Urdu, employment, and special treatment. They felt that any recognition of these demands would not only inhibit their economic opportunity but would also undermine their political influence. In this respect, Hindu opposition to the Memorial cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader context of Hindu-Muslim cultural conflict. In the beginning, it was a battle of the elite, but soon the element of religious controversy helped to bring home the economic problems to the common Muslim and the ordinary Hindu.

Long before the Memorial, Hindus had been opposed to Muslim plea for special treatment. *The Education Gazette* criticized Muslims of Nuddea district for their memorial and blamed Sir George Campbell for having made the Muslims "more conceited than ever." It commented:

> Though not educated as Hindus, they aspire to the privilege of obtaining equal appointments in the public service, and reproach the Government with injustice if their aspirations are not gratified. They seem to forget that both Hindus and Muhammadans are equal in the sight of the rulers, who make no distinction in the distribution of favours when candidates are equally qualified: nay in some respects the Muhammadan is rather viewed with more favour than Hindu.[1]

1. *The Education Gazette*, 10 November 1875, *BNNR*, IOL.

Hindus felt justified in blaming the Muslims for holding aloof from English education, which was the cause of their backwardness. A section of Hindu elite began to interpret the Muslim deprivation in terms of a Hindu compensation for their alleged suffering under the Muslim rule. These notions were actively promoted by some English administrators and historians. Erskine expounded that educated Hindus cherished a vivid memory of the alleged "excesses committed under Mussulman rule," and even entertained fears of the renewal of "struggle for power" in the event of a withdrawal of British protection from India. For the British it was an obligation and a "sense of national morality" to train "the Hindus how to govern themselves,"[1] before the British link with India was severed. Elliot had already set the focus of historical research on the alleged Hindu deprivation and suffering under Muslim rule.[2] An antipathy was thus created against the Muslim at the intellectual and emotional level. The Hindu revivalist found a sympathetic chord in such ideas. Fed with these prejudices, the Hindu officer used his authority in an open or calendestine manner to keep away Muslim candidates from Government service. Consequently, Muslim exclusion from public service began to strain Hindu-Muslim amity.

It suited Hindu vested interest to applaud Government professions of impartiality in the dispensation of state patronage, and thereby a double advantage could be gained. Firstly, an identification with the official policy conveyed an impression of solid Hindu cooperation with the Government. Secondly, Muslim claims for a fair distribution of state patronage could be easily countered by invoking slogans of equality of opportunity, and free enterprise borrowed from British political vocabulary. Since Hindu interests and the Government policy coincided on this point, it did not require any exceptional probity on their part to justify Government's rejection of Muslim demands for exceptional treatment. The Hindu organizations and elite made a common front to protest against any preferential treatment for Muslims which in their opinion amounted to discrimination against the largest community of India. Sardar Dyal Singh, President Indian Association, Lahore, observed:

> The opportunities given by the Government are equally available to all. There is no reason why any class or classes of people should be treated with special indulgence.[3]

1. P. Erskine, 'The Future of India,' *The Nineteenth Century*, December, 1876, B.M.
2. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-69.
3. *The Punjab Education Commission Report*, p. 202.

Baba Khem Singh Bedi of Rawalpindi, expressed similar views.[1] Pandit Ishwar Parshad considered the advocates of exceptional treatment as "blind friends."[2] The Lahore Arya Samaj attributed the Muslim backwardness to their "religious prejudices,"[3] and was not disposed to tolerate any special arrangements for Muslim education. Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar asserted that no class of population in Bengal required exceptional treatment.[4] Babu Bireshwar Mittra, a pleader of N. W. Provinces complained that Muslims alone had made demands for exceptional treatment even though they already enjoyed "more than legitimate share of the 'loaves and fishes' of the Government service without receiving the benefits of English education."[5] The Hindu argument suited British policy and pacified British conscience as well.

The introduction of Hindi in Bihar quickened the pace of Hindi movement in the N. W. Provinces and local Hindus sought to make Hindi as the official language on the basis of their majority in the province. They extolled Hindi as the language of Hindu religion and claimed that their sacred books like the *Ramayana* could only be studied in Hindi. Hindus of the Punjab also joined this campaign. Babu Bireshwar Mittra affirmed that for Hindus Urdu, was "a pure and simple survival of Muslim tyranny." He argued that "the same conditions which operated in favour of Hindi in Bihar, exist in all the districts of North-West...", and was gratified that "the battle between Hindi and Urdu has been fought in Behar, and the victory was justly gained by the partisans of Hindi."[6] Sir Syed's observation before the Education Commission that Urdu was "the language of the gentry and Hindi that of the vulgar,"[7] was repudiated by Babu Harish Chandra who retorted that Urdu was the language of the dancing girls and prostitutes. "The depraved sons of wealthy Hindus, and youths of substance and loose character, when in the society of harlots, concubines and pimps, speak Urdu,[8]...was another insinuation brought by him against Hindu supporters of Urdu. A deputation of Bharat Barsha National Association of Aligarh pleaded before the Education Commission[9] for the recognition of Hindi as the official language. The Hindu

1. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 471.
4. *Bengal Education Commission Report*, p. 368.
5. *N. W. Provinces Education Commission Report*, p. 410.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 400.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 416-18.

residents of Allahabad affirmed, that education in Urdu had "frozen all independent energy of the people."[1] The Meerut Deva-Nagri Parcharni Sabha also remonstrated for the recognition of Hindi.[2] Significantly, some Christian missionaries also took up the fight for Hindi. Rev. Bedden linked up the Hindi question with the rights of Hindu majority:

> If the rule of the majority, in this case so enormous, and of original right, and of domestic usage are to decide the matter, there can be no question that Hindi language and the Nagri character ought to be regarded as the vernacular of the people of Northern India, and should also be the current language of the Government courts, and of primary education...Hindus, who outnumber the Muhammadans by 5 to 1, are endeavouring to recover as their natural right, though this is disallowed by the Muhammadans.[3]

The small Hindu community of Dera Ghazi Khan, living in the midst of a preponderant Muslim majority, demanded that Hindi "should have at least equal place with, if not greater than Urdu, especially where the majority of students are Hindus."[4] Hindu inhabitants of Gujranwala claimed that Hindi was the natural language of the people and even those Hindus who had been converted to Islam still retained "their Hindi Bhasha."[5] The Hindus of Shahpur presented a memorial to the Education Commission in support of Hindi.[6] A number of Hindu clerks of the state railway, and Hindu residents of Gujrat and Lala Musa also submitted a memorial on the same lines.[7] The Arya Samaj, Lahore asserted that Urdu was neither the language of Hindus nor of Muslims, and was "written in perfectly redundant, imperfect, unphonetic characters."[8] The Punjab Brahma Sabha also criticised the unphonetical Urdu script, and suggested the recognition of Hindi in Devnagri script in place of Urdu which was foreign to the people. Arguing on similar lines the Bhasha Parcharni Sabha claimed that Muslims in general showed no "antipathy against the use of Devnagri characters, notwithstanding what those who want to be the leaders of the Muhammadans might say."[10] The Sat Sabha, Lahore,

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 422-28.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 480-89.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 384.
4. *The Punjab Education Commission Report*, p. 553.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 554.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 557.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 558-59.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 471.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 490.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 546-49.

a Sikh organisation, took exception to the use of Urdu in the Punjab, and advocated the cause of Punjabi.[1] The Sikh National Association also expressed itself in favour of Punjabi.[2] The non-Muslim elements of the Punjab were largely opposed to Urdu. However some Hindu partisans of Urdu, like Narindra Singh of Lahore submitted a memorial bearing 3,906 signatures of men of all communities in support of Urdu. But such exceptions did not undermine Hindu and Sikh opposition to Urdu. Baden Powell, the Commissioner of Lahore Division described the prevalent Hindu and Sikh mood.

> With them it is a national and religious question. The Sikhs and Hindus think that their nationality and faith is undermined by Urdu, which they regard as the badge of Muhammadanism.[3]

Hindus of Karachi in their memorial expounded that the genius of Sanskrit literature was "in perfect accord with the inner life, the religion, thought and sentiments of the whole Hindu population," and regretted that no encouragement was given to "its diffusion and development in Sindh".[4] The inhabitants of Shikarpur and Thatta also made representation to the authorities for the establishment of Sanskrit schools in their areas.

Hindu press was more outspoken in its opposition to the Muslim demands. *The Reformer* criticised the Memorial, and claimed that Muslims would not make any progress even if they got their share of Government service. In Afghanistan, Muslims held the monopoly of state patronage but were in no way ahead of the English. The real cause of Muslim decay lay in their belief that they should not bear any resemblance to other people.[5] *The Hindoo Patriot* criticised Ameer Ali's article in the *Nineteenth Century*, and protested against the recommendations of the Education Commission and the decision of the Governor General granting some exceptional assistance for Muslims education.

> "But we are as a rule, opposed on broad principles of justice and propriety to any special favour being shown to any section of Her Majesty's subjects, as distinguished from an other, and special measures being framed for their advancement and welfare, unless utter incapacity for self-help be established by clearest available evidence, such as cannot, we are afraid, be adduced in this particular case."[6]

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 561-62.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 499.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
4. *Bombay Education Commission Report*, pp. 36-45.
5. *Reformer*, 17 July 1882, PUL.
6. *The Hindoo Patriot*, 24 November, 1884, IOL.

The Hindoo Patriot was jubilant that "the hue and cry raised by the Mahomedan Community for affording special facilities to them,... has been set at rest by a resolution of the Supreme Government."[1] *Hindustani* dubbed the complaints of the Central National Mahomedan Association regarding Muslim under-representation in the public service as "exaggerated and uncalled for." Complimenting Dufferin for refusing "the unjust desire of the Association,"[2] the paper demanded that no relaxation in qualifications for state employment should be allowed to Muslims since it would "involve a great injustice to Hindus."[3] *Bharat Basi* was gratified that Dufferin had rejected Muslim plaints for special treatment.[4] *Sadharni* deprecated the Association for seeking to prevent Hindu-Muslim unity by demanding separate institutions for Muslims.[5] *Samaja* advised the Government not to show any undue favour to Muslims and lamented that Hindus were in a worse condition than Muslims.[6] *The Tribune* asserted that "the allegations of the memorialists as to depressed condition of Indian Mussalmans did not apply to Northern India." Since English was as much a foreign language for Hindus as it was for Muslims, the latter had to blame themselves for their backwardness.[7] *The Hindoo Patriot* regretted that an enlightened body like the Association "should have come forward to give vent to a feeling of class jealousy against the Hindus" in matter of state employment. It commented:

> "But the Government cannot be surely charged with shutting Mahomedans out from the independent professions, nor can the Hindus be charged with creating a monopoly in them."[8]

Undoubtedly, English authority and Hindu influence were both arrayed against the Muslims whom they grudged even minimal fair treatment.

Implementation of the Resolution

The implementation of the Resolution, or the lack of it, brought Muslims face to face with new political realities and obliged them to re-assess and reorientate their attitude towards the Government and the Hindus. The three years from 1885 to 1888 were spent in eager expectation

1. *The Hindoo Patriot*, 27 July 1885, IOL.
2. *Hindustani*, Lucknow, 2 August 1885, cited in, *NWPNR* 1885, IOL.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Bharat Basi*, 25 July 1885, cited in *BNNR*.
5. *Sadharni*, 26 July 1885, cited in *Ibid.*
6. *Samaja*, 27 July 1885, cited in *Ibid.*
7. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 1 August 1885, IOL.
8. *The Hindoo Patriot*, 17 August 1885, IOL

and patient cooperation gradually turning into disillusionment. In their earnestness, Muslims had hoped for the fullest application of the Resolution, but the mental reservation of officials, both English and Hindu, who were charged with its implementation had remained unchanged. Despite formal conformity to the Resolution, the operative clauses of the Resolution were either ignored or reduced to a dead letter. In some provinces, the measures taken were haphazard and inadequate, and officials still hesitated to improve the ratio of Muslims in the state patronage. Since Muslims had no means to overcome calculated official indifference, the Association and its branches again began to remonstrate with the Local Governments. But it was by no means an unenviable task. The sponsors of the Memorial came to the painful realisation, that after all, their triumph had been no better than a hollow moral victory, which still required the sanction of political strength. It took them years of disillusionment to learn this lesson.

Pursuant to the Resolution of 1885 the Government of Bengal appointed a committee in December 1885 comprising of Ameer Ali, Nawab Abdul Latif, Nawab Mir Muhammad Ali and Phillips Nolan to enquire into Muslim educational endowments in Bengal. It was reiterated that Hindu education had been "largely indebted to private liberality."[1] But Muslims could benefit from comparatively smaller sources of private beneficence. In this committee two discordant elements had been put together. The differences between Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif were not unknown to the Government. Old controversy was re-kindled on the question of desirability or otherwise of utilizing the endowment funds for English education.[2] As the custodians of endowments felt that their vested interests would be endangered they displayed hostility to the committee and refused to submit their accounts for scrutiny. Not empowered to call witnesses, the committee felt handicapped in its work, and after two years made certain inocuous recommendations like the provision of legal facilities in cases involving litigation against the custodians of endowments.[3] Disgusted, Ameer Ali commented, "It could not achieve anything."[4]

In reply to the letter of the Secretary of Bengal Endowment Committee, Government of the Punjab, in its letter of 15 January 1887 stated that, it

1. "Resolution of Government of Bengal" 8, December, 1885, *The Calcutta Gazette*, 19 December, 1885. This resolution could not be traced by the editor of *The Memoirs*.

2. Muhammad Siraj-ud-Din, *Majmua Lekture-Ha*, p. 225.

3. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 9 March 1889, 'Editorial', pp. 5-8.

4. *The Moslem Chronicle*, 13 January 1900,

did not feel any necessity for such a committee,[1] thereby indicating that it did not consider itself bound to implement this section of the Resolution. Muharram Ali Chishti criticised this decision, and emphasized that the demand for appointment of a Muslim endowment committee had been unanimously made by the Central National Mahomedan Association, the Anjuman-i-Islamia, and the Muhammadan Educational Conference, and had been endorsed by Syed Ameer Ali and Sir Syed.[2] But the Government of the Punjab remained unmoved.

The Government of N. W. Provinces also persisted in withholding the appointment of an endowment committee. In a farewell address to Dufferin, Sir Syed thanked the Government of India for the Resolution of 1885, and expressed the hope that the Local Government would implement the Resolution regarding the endowments.[3] Dufferin, in his reply assured them that the Lieutenant Governors of N. W. Provinces and the Punjab did sympathise with the wants of the Muslims and would take appropriate action.[4] Sir Syed had already taken up this question, in December 1887, in the Muhammadan Educational Conference which passed a resolution urging the custodians of endowments to utilize income from the *waqfs* for teaching the Quran, Hadith and Fiqh, and advised them to continue the tradition of classical disciplines in religious schools. The resolution did not favour any diversion of such funds to English education.[5] Sir Syed again took up this issue in the third session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference in December 1888, at Lahore. He assured the Government that they did not want any interference with the custodians of the *waqfs*, and did not envisage any change in the purpose for which those *waqfs* were instituted, but only asked for an inquiry to determine their number and nature in N. W. Provinces and the Punjab. The Governments of these provinces were also urged to implement the Resolution of 1885 as had been done in Bengal.[6]

Sir Syed's opinions were reflected in the resolutions of the Muhammadan Educational Conference which took up a different line on the *waqfs* from the one advocated by Ameer Ali and the Association. Sir Syed's policy evoked a rejoinder from a correspondent of *Rafiq-i-Hind*, who

1. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 9 March 1889.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Muhammad Siraj-ud-Din, *Sir Syed*, *Majmua Lekture-Ha*, p. 226.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 7 January, 1888.
6. *Majmua Lekture-Ha*, pp. 223-26.

criticised him for opposing the useful *waqf* policy of Ameer Ali.[1] Significantly as a result of the political initiative of the CNMA, Government of Bengal, despite its reservations, promptly appointed an endowment committee, but the Governments of N. W. Provinces and the Punjab kept on deferring the matter till 1888. Procrastination by Governments of the Punjab, and the N.W. Provinces could be ascribed to the weakness of local Associations who failed to exert pressure on the Local Governments. Sir Syed and his followers preferred official sufferance to political action, and as a result had to continue waiting even after 1888 for the favour of having an endowment committee appointed.

Ameer Ali was not satisfied with the implementation of the Resolution in Bengal and complained to Dufferin about the attitude of Rivers Thompson. Dufferin replied, "I am sure Thompson is animated by the kindest feelings towards the Mohammadans."[2] In the meantime, the Government of Bengal issued a circular letter to all departmental heads emphasizing the principle of "a fair field and no favours,"[3] and instructing them to report about the extent of Muslim employment in their departments. In places where Muslims did not receive an adequate share of state patronage, the officials were asked to suggest remedies without in any way lowering the standards of efficiency in public services. It was also pointed out that subordinate officers who were mostly Hindus tended to get in their own men, and in such cases "it would be desirable to adopt a special measure to secure to Mahommedans their fair share of employment."[4] Nine months later, the Government of Bengal issued a Resolution on 8 October 1886 about Muslim employment. One of the remedial measures recommended was that a list should be prepared containing the names of Muslims eligible for employment, and it should be circulated to the various departments, and half yearly returns showing the religion of the officers employed should also be submitted to the Government. Impressing upon officers the orders of the Government of India, the Lieutenant Governor advised that in keeping with efficiency due share of appointments should go to Muslims, "so as to prevent the depression of a numerous and influential class, and secure their cooperation for the general benefit of the administration."[5]

1. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 1 December 1888.
2. Ameer Ali to Dufferin, 15 January 1886, Microfilm Ree lNo. 529, *DC.*, IOL.
3. Circular No. 827, January 1886, *Bengal Education Proceedings*, February 1886.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Resolution of the Govt. of Bengal, 8 October 1886, *Bengal Education Proceedings*.

Minor concessions were made in all the provinces. In Bengal and the Punjab 120 scholarships were established.[1] But all this was too inadequate. The Anjuman-i-Islamia, Lahore presented a memorial to the Government of Punjab requesting for the implementation of the Resolution; and as a result the Director of Public Instructions issued a circular letter to various officers about the desirability of "founding scholarships for the special encouragement of education amongst Muhammadans."[2] The Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab announced the establishment "of a certain number of scholarships to be called 'Jubilee Scholarships' for Mahommedan boys."[3] The Government of Bombay agreed to accept for reference lists of Muslim candidates prepared by the local Muslim organizations. A similar list was prepared by Ameer Ali on behalf of the Association and presented to the Government of Bengal. The Muhammadan Association of Madras also drew up lists of suitably qualified Muslim candidates for public service. *The Muslim Herald* of Madras undertook to publish, free of charge, information about vacancies in the Government departments.[4] On similar lines, the National Muhammadan Association of Punjab volunteered to provide lists of qualified Muslim candidates, and the editor of *Rafiq-i-Hind* pledged to publish them.[5] The Government of the Punjab accepted this offer and in its letter stated:

> This permission is given on the understanding that no candidate will be entered in the list who cannot be thoroughly recommended by the Association for Government service.[6]

In their eagerness, Muslim public bodies cooperated with the Government at all levels, and disproved the allegation that English educated Muslims were not available. In response to their petitions the Government issued circulars which often filled the files instead of filling the vacancies. Neither was the Government inefficient, nor deficient in resources, it was only deficient in honest intention. The mental reservation of the officers undermined Government action. An officer of the Punjab Government commenting, on the memorials of Anjuman-i-Islamia and the Punjab National Muhammadan Association, in his note to the

1. *Memoirs*, Syed Ameer Ali, pp. 58-59.
2. *Punjab*: *Home Deptt. General Proceedings*, February 1889, Punjab Record Office, Lahore. (Henceforth PRO).
3. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 15 April 1887, IOL.
4. Chishti to Under Secretary Govt. of Punjab, Home (Education) Deptt., 4 October, 1888. *Home Deptt. General Proceedings*, *Punjab*, February 1889, PRO.
5. *Ibid.*

Tupper, Secretary to Govt. of Punjab, No. 264, 8 February 1889. *Ibid.*, PRO.

Lieutenant-Governor expressed his misgivings about para 22 of the Resolution of 1885:

> I do not know that limiting competition for certain vacancies to Hindus and Muhammadans respectively with general reference to population, etc. would be showing special favour to either class. The idea is opposed to ordinary English notions of equality, but what would satisfy Birmingham and Manchester is not what would satisfy Delhi and Lahore.[1]

Although Government had recognized the need of correcting the balance of state patronage between Hindus and Muslims, it failed to translate its pledges into practice, as it sought to reconcile two contradictory principles of competition and special treatment. To the English mind, nurtured in the atmosphere of free enterprise of an industrial society competition appeared more rational. Political expediency, prescribed special treatment for certain classes, which did not carry conviction with those who were charged with implementing the Resolution. This dichotomy in Government thinking perpetuated inequalities in the distribution of state patronage. Naturally Muslims were disappointed.

Since 1882, the Central National Muhammadan Association had been demanding Muslim representation in government employment in relation to their numerical strength in the population of the country. This political strategy was devised to offset the imbalances created by system of competitive examinations. Reservation of jobs for educated Muslims on population basis was the only way to secure justice for Muslims. On the contrary, Government of the Punjab began to extend the application of competitive examinations to subordinate executive appointments, and even the number of Muslim Extra Commissioners appointed for political considerations of N. W. Frontier policy was drastically reduced. Consequently, Government of the Punjab confessed that the number of Hindus in superior appointments "has no doubt increased of late,"[2] but the number of Muslims in other departments did not show any "marked diminution."[3] How could these contradictory positions be reconciled?

In fact, after 1885, Muslims were slipping down in the graph of comparative progress. In Bengal, the position of Muslims in executive and judicial services did not register any improvement. Muslims of Bombay and Sind did not fare any better. In the Punjab and N. W. Provinces they

1. *Ibid.*

2. Secretary, Govt. of Punjab to the Registrar Chief Court Punjab etc., 2nd August 1887, *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

had begun to lose their marginal advantages. Even the figures[1] given by the Public Service Commission regarding relative Hindu and Muslim position in the executive and judicial branches could not falsify Muslim grievance.

Province	Hindus	Muslims
Madras	297	14
Bombay and Sind	328	21
Bengal	522	53
N. W. Provinces & Oudh	262	235
Punjab	161	127
Central Provinces	91	22
Assam	56	6
Hyderabad (assigned districts)	29	7
Total:	1,866	514

The Public Service Commission concluded:

> "Of a total of 2,588 persons employed in both the Executive and Judicial branches, 1,886 or 72.1 per cent are Hindus, and 514 or 19.8 per cent are Mahomedans. This proportion corresponds more or less closely with the general proportions to the total population of Hindus and Mahomedans, which are approximately 75 per cent and 20 per cent. respectively."[2]

These figures give the impression that as a matter of state policy the principles of proportionate employment was being adhered to, but in reality it was not being applied to the provinces where it was most needed. In 1888, Muslims of Bengal were still being neglected, and Muslims of the Punjab fared no better. It was no comfort for Muslims of majority provinces, if for political reasons the Muslim minority in N. W. Provinces was over-represented. This amounted to setting Muslims against each other. Prima facie, these figures show that the Hindus were under-represented in public service. No doubt Hindus were under-represented in the N. W. Provinces, but the overall position was different. Hindus enjoyed 75 per cent of the state employment, but of the remaining 25 per cent Muslims had a paltry share, the lion's share was held by the microscopic minority of the Eurasians and Indian Christians. Official statistics were a blatant gloss.

An analysis of the province-wise distribution of state patronage would show that Muslim deprivation was not a matter of coincidence but

1. "Indian Public Service Commission Report", *Parliamentary Papers, 1888* (C. 5327), Vol. 48, pp. 28-30.

2. *Ibid.*

the product of a calculated policy. For years the Government had been giving preference to the Hindu minority over Muslim majority in the Punjab, and Bengal (minus Bihar and Orissa). Although Muslims formed one third of the total population of Bengal, their representation in Government employment was in no way proportionate with their numbers. In April 1871, the total number of Muslims in Government departments of Bengal was 92 in comparison with 681 Hindus.[1] In 1888, Muslims in the Executive and Judicial branches were 53, in relation to 522 Hindu officers in the same departments. Seventeen years of progress in English education had failed to improve their lot but instead their proportion registered a decrease. Forming 51.3 per cent of the provincial population, Muslim could attain only 39.3 of the Executive and Judicial appointments. On the contrary, in the N. W. Provinces, the Hindu majority comprising 86.2 per cent of population was deprived of its due share in these appointments in favour of a Muslim minority of 13.7 per cent which enjoyed almost an equal share of state patronage with them.[2] The following table pertaining to the appointments in the Executive and Judicial branches shows this disparity:[3]

Name of Province	Hindu percentage in population	Hindu percentage in appointments	Muslim percentage in population	Muslim percentage in appointments
Bengal	65.3	83.7	31.2	8.5
The Punjab	40.7	49.8	51.3	39.3
Assam	62.7	84.8	26.9	0.9
Madras	91.4	86	6.2	0.4
Bombay and Sind	79.6	85.4	18.3	5.4
Central Provinces	75.3	75.2	2.4	18.1
N.W. Provinces and Oudh	86.2	50.2	13.4	45.1
Hyderabad and Assigned Districts	90.7	69	7	16.6

If Muslims of N. W. Provinces got a larger share, it did not imply that they were more advanced in English education than the Muslims of Bengal or the Punjab. This is clear from the relative number of Muslim students in 1878-1879.[4]

1. Sir W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalmans*, Lahore Edition, 1964, p. 126.
2. *Report of the Public Service Commission*, p. 31.
3. *Ibid.*
4. "Statement of Moral and Material Progress 1878-79," *Parliamentary Papers*, (402-Sen-2) LIII., I.

Province	Muslim Students	Total No. of Students
Bengal	132,089	727,707
Punjab	39,612	106,576 (Approximate)
N. W. P. & Oudh	40,241	242,580

If English education was the only criterion of distribution of state patronage, Muslims of Bengal and Punjab also deserved a fair share of government employment. Neither Muslim minority of N. W. Provinces had outstripped the Hindu majority in English education nor outshone Muslims of Bengal and Punjab to deserve this exceptional treatment. Obviously, state patronage, was governed by the higher interests of state policy, progress in English education was not the decisive factor. To bolster up Hindu minority in Muslim majority provinces of Punjab, and Eastern Bengal; and on similar lines to prop a Muslim minority in the Hindu majority area of N. W. Provinces was a part of political strategy to widen the existing gulf between the Hindus and Muslims. Otherwise there can be no explanation for such an anomaly. Since Muslim minorities of Madras, Bombay (excluding Sind), Assam and Central Provinces were too small or too depressed to be a political factor they were easily ignored.

The National Muhammadan Association of Punjab kept on pressing the Government and was supported by several Muslim organisations. In January 1887, Anjuman-i-Islamia, Lahore, submitted a memorial signed by Muslims from all over the Punjab, inviting attention of the Government to "the paucity of appointments held by Muhammadans in Government offices".[1] The Lieutenant Governor examined it, and issued a confidential letter to the heads of Departments, in which he admitted that the number of Hindus in higher appointments had "steadily increased of late," and noted the "preponderance of Hindus among the Extra Assistants and Munsiffs, who are now appointed on a competitive basis." Since the subordinate ministerial posts were "very generally held by Hindus", it was not improbable that Muslim candidates were excluded "owing to existence in many offices of an official clique composed of the Hindu element." Despite all this, he hesitated "to lay down any rule regarding the proportion of Hindus and Muhammadans respectively to be maintained in various offices,"[2] but only desired that it should approximate "to the respective proportions of Hindus and Muhammadans among the upper and middle classes of the population of the district,

1. The Secretary of Govt. of Punjab to the Registrar Chief Court etc., 2 August 1887, *Punjab Proceedings*.

2. *Ibid.*

counting all the land-owners, merchants and shopkeepers as included in one or the other of those classes".[1] Now a new element of class distinction was introduced to confound the question of state patronage.

Complaints from branches of CNMA flooded the headquarters lamenting the non-implementation of the Resolution. On this basis, the Association, reiterated in its report for 1885-88 that, "instances have come to the knowledge of this Association in which acknowledged claims of qualified Mahommedan candidates have been ignored and overridden by shuffling of cards in departmental offices."[2] In another memorial in March 1888, the Association pointed out "the disparity between the number of Mahommedans and Hindus in the Statutory Civil Service," for there were only two Muslims in comparison with nine Hindus in this highly prestigious service. This imbalance had been caused by the competitive examinations, which were "most fallacious tests of merit and ability." Instead, the Government should select probationers for the Statutory Civil Service as was being done in Bombay, Madras and the N. W. Provinces where the proportion of Muslims in that service was fair.[3] But Sir Syed opposed the Memorial, advised the Association "not to hanker after concessions in their memorials, and not to raise hopes of the people in the improbable, but to exert in the practical promotion of education."[4]

He commented:

> "We take exception to the manners in which they were pressing for special concessions from the Government. In the past they presented a powerful memorial, and recently the Muslims of Noakhali have also submitted a similar memorial. We do not approve of such means which have little hope of success. Our principle is based on Self-Help."[5]

An overall application of proportionate representation in public service, would have brought a drastic reduction in the share of Muslims of N. W. Provinces in state patronage. In this context, Sir Syed's opposition to the demands of the Association was understandable, although his homily of self-help was inapplicable to the circumstances of the Muslims of Bengal. Sir Syed's opposition weakened the stand of the Association. Dismissing this memorial, the Lieutenant Governor commented that the Resolution

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Triennial Report of the Committee of the Central National Mahommedan Association, 1885-1888*, Calcutta, p. 15.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

4. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

5. *AIG*, 2 April 1886, cited by Manglori, *Ibid.*, pp. 319-320.

of July 1885 "was meant to meet a temporary occasion and was intended to prescribe the method by which nominations to the statutory civil service will be made."[1] But the statistics testified that even the needs of 'temporary occasion' of Muslims of Bengal were not met.

On 24 March, 1888, a deputation of the Association comprising delegates from different parts of Bengal, Bihar and the North presented a farewell address to Dufferin. On this occasion, Ameer Ali once again gave expression to Muslim disappointment that the Resolution had not been properly implemented and fell short of their requirements and expectations. Dufferin was gratified that Muslims were making progress in education "under the intelligent leaders I see before me",[2] and hoped that before long "the present causes of complaint and dissatisfaction which you have felt so keenly will eventually disappear."[3] The Muslims of Bombay "expressed their disappointment because Dufferin had not done more for them" and did not present any farewell address to the Viceroy on his retirement.[4]

To press the demands of Muslims of Bengal for a proper share of state patronage, the Association again pleaded:

> "But your memorialists regret to find that in spite of these Resolutions and in spite also of the fact that English education has made a decided progress within recent years among the Muhammadans, the condition of our co-religionists has in no degree improved. From statistics furnished to your memorialists from the different districts in Bengal and other provinces and enquiries made in several Departments we find that instead of improvement there has been an appreciable retrogression.[5]

Although the Local Government was apprised of the present situation, they requested the Viceroy "to place on record," before his departure from India, "such recommendations as may seem advisable for the legitimate assistance of the Muhammadan community and which may prove likely to strengthen the hands of the Local Government in its endeavours to improve the position of the Mussalman community".[6]

Dufferin forwarded their memorial to the Secretary of State who considered it in Council, and in his reply observed that the statistics gathered

1. *Triennial Report of the Committee of CNMA*, p. 18.

2. Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, *Speeches Delivered in India 1884-1888*, London 1890, pp. 203-05, IOL.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Reay to Cross, 24 December, 1888, Eur. MSS. E. 243/53/6 *Cross Collection*, IOL.

5. Hewett, Under Secretary Govt. of India, Home Deptt., to the Secretary Govt. of Punjab, 8 September 1888, enclosure, *Punjab Proceedings*.

6. *Ibid.*

by the Association were not made available to him. But relying on the report of the Public Service Commission, he concluded that :

> "in the distribution of appointments in the Executive and Judicial Branches of the Service, nearly 20 per cent of the persons appointed are Muhammadans, while about 72 per cent are Hindus. These proportions correspond as the Commissioners remark, more or less closely with the general proportion to the total population of Hindus and Muhammadans, which are approximately 75 per cent and 20 per cent respectively".[1]

He argued, that inter-communal proportions were not uniformly reflected in the distribution of state patronage throughout India, because Muslims of N.W. Provinces, Central Provinces and Hyderabad and Assigned Districts held larger share of employment than warranted by their numerical strength. In these provinces, Muslims either retained, or acquired their share as a result of better education. But in the provinces where Muslims did not have proper share of government employment was due to their backwardness in English education which had been provided for all. Sympathising with the "legitimate aspirations" of the memorialists he expressed his confidence that the Local Governments and Administrations would "recognise and act on the policy laid down in the Resolution," to which he gave his "full approval."[2]

The Secretary of State had misconstrued the standpoint of CNMA. The Bengal and Punjab Associations and their branches stood for proportionate representation in all the provinces. They never implied that provincial imbalances should be left unremedied. If the overall Muslim share in the services corresponded with the total ratio of Muslim population in the country, it did not mean that on this account Muslims of Bengal and the Punjab should be denied their due share. Since implementation of the Resolution was undertaken on provincial basis, arguing on basis of countrywide communal proportion of Muslims was irrelevant and unrealistic. To tip the statistical scale in favour of Muslims of British India, figures of Muslim employment in Hyderabad, were lumped with them. It could be justified only if the figures of Hindu employees in Hindu states were similarly reckoned. The Secretary of State asserted that state patronage had already been equitably distributed between the communities. Now, no less an authority than the Secretary of State had certified the fulfilment of the Resolution.

1. From Secretary of State for India to the Governor General of India in Council, 22 November, 1888, *Punjab Proceedings, Ibid.*

2. *Ibid.*

As a last resort, the Association deputed Ameer Ali to plead the Muslim case with the Secretary of State and to bring their condition to the notice of the British public.[1] It was his second visit to England in connection with Muslim education and employment.

As the CNMA continued its pressure its tone became more assertive and its demands well-defined. On behalf of the Punjab branch, Muharram Ali Chishti also submitted a memorial to the Lieutenant Governor, on 4 October 1888, claiming that Muslim share in Government appointments had not "improved in the least" despite the circulars issued by the Government. "Similar circulars were issued by the Governments of Bengal, Bombay and Madras, but they have no practical effect on account of the great influence of one section of our countrymen in public offices", he commented. To canalise "complaints from different parts of the province" the Association offered to prepare lists of suitable candidates as was being done in Bengal and Madras. The Association criticized the system of competitive examinations and suggested:

> If it may be deemed necessary to have the competitive system at all, a certain number of posts in every department ought to be reserved for Hindus and Muhammadans respectively in proportion to the population of the locality; . . . Hindus only competing for the posts reserved for them and Muhammadans likewise for the appointments set apart for them in accordance to the general standard.[2]

The Association wanted "just rights" and did not "mean to recommend the employment of unfit Muhammadans simply because they are Muhammadans, nor to solicit any kind of undue favouritism to be shown to them by Government".[3]

Commenting on this memorial the Lieutenant Governor observed that the competitive examinations worked not only to the disadvantage of Muslims, but also to the detriment of some other classes who had strong claims like the Hindu Jats and Sikh Jats. "Some unobjectionable modification"[4] to correct the present system could be considered like reserving some posts for candidates of different classes who obtained a certain level of marks in the competitive examinations. Similarly candidates belonging to the agriculturist class and to "the leading land-holding tribes, viz., Pathans, Rajputs, Syads, Mogals, Biluchis, Ghakars, Janjuas, Koreshis,

1. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 7 July, 1888.
2. Chishti to the Under Secretary, Government of Punjab, 4 October 1888, *Punjab Proceedings*, PRO.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Proceedings, Home Deptt., Punjab Government*, No. 14-22A, February 1889, PRO.

Jats, Awans, Kanets"[1] should be considered for reserved posts. This pernicious proposal militated against Muslim homogeneity and sought to accentuate the socio-economic prejudices between the so-called agriculturist and non-agriculturist Muslim. Now the Government began to employ new political devices to perpetuate the split in Muslim society.

Chishti sought to enlist the support of the press for the memorial, and also wrote to Kay Robinson, editor of *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore. But Kay had something different in mind:

> I have been asked by the Association to support it if I can, and I should be glad to do so, because I find that what I have been able to do hitherto has had a good effect in separating Mussalmans and Sikhs from the Congress movement. I wish, however, to be only scrupulously fair and to endeavour to get the Punjabi Hindus on the right side also.[2]

Tupper, the Secretary to the Punjab Government, did not answer his "marginal queries with any precision," but sent him some confidential papers which he could utilise without "indicating the sources".[3] Perhaps Kay Robinson was not the only Englishman to have attributed Muslim frustration in this matter to Hindu obstruction rather than to Government opposition. The English administrator and the Anglo-Indian press essayed to exploit Muslim anger to accentuate Muslim boycott of the Indian National Congress. Official attempts to confound Muslim demands with their opposition to the Congress, amounted to accentuating Hindu-Muslim political strife, from which the Association had so consistently abstained. Nevertheless, the unique position the Congress held among Hindus, made Government all the more cautious that any mark of favour shown to the Muslims would make the "Congress openly hostile to the Government."[4]

Repeated failures convinced Ameer Ali that time had come to evolve a well-concerted policy on this problem. But his efforts to call a national conference had already fallen through. Although much discouraged, the Association continued its work. In January 1889, a deputation of the Association presented an address of welcome to Lord Landsdowne, reiterated their same old arguments that Muslim employment was steadily declining and in some departments it had fallen to 1:27, and pleaded for full and true implementation of the Resolution.[5] In his reply, Lands-

1. *Ibid.*
2. Kay Robinson to Tupper, 6 November 1888, *Punjab Proceedings.*
3. Draft reply, Tupper to Robinson, 25 January 1889, *Ibid.*
4. Reay to Cross, 10 September 1888, *Cross Collection.*
5. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 12 January 1889.

downe conceded that Muslims had suffered to some extent because their "share of national wealth" was less than the "numerical strength" entitled them to have. He assured them that the policy embodied in the Resolution of 1885 would "be faithfully observed in its fundamental principles, subject to such modifications as may be suggested by enlarged experience."[1]

By 1889 the Government had begun to modify its policy in relation to Muslim employment and representation. This posed a new challenge. But now the Association was passing through a crisis of transition. Ameer Ali had failed to transform the Association into a Muhammadan Political Conference of India to counter-balance the power of the Congress. The political growth of the Association was thus retarded. After this traumatic experience it only survived in form and its inner dynamism withered away soon. In 1890, Ameer Ali's elevation to the Bench of Calcutta High Court meant his exit from the political scene. In this movement, he had risen to the stature of a national leader, and "his enforced withdrawal from politics narrowed the appeal of the Association."[2] Three years later, Chishti, leader of the Punjab branch frustrated by the inactivity of the parent Association, and piqued by Sir Syed's policies joined the Indian National Congress.[3] It deprived the Punjab branch of its leader and its organ, *Rafiq-i-Hind*. Though the Association survived in Bengal, it had already passed its climax in 1888. However, it was still remembered with gratitude in certain quarters. Abdul Halim Sharar, editor of *Dilgudaz*, reproduced an article of Syed Ali Ausat on Ameer Ali, which had been printed in the *Oudh Review*. The writer acknowledged that the Central National Mahomedan Association had been a "source of great benefits" for Muslims and Ameer Ali during his period of secretaryship of the Association "played an important part in the welfare of Muslims and his influence on his co-religionists was acknowledged in all quarters."[4] He referred to the Memorial and the Resolution of 1885 as testimony of his achievement, and praised his contribution to the amendments of the Muslim Law.[5]

Some attempts were made to revive the Association, and as late as 1903, certain Mr. Riazuddin Ahmad wrote an open letter to Syed Ameer Husain, Secretary of the Association, urging him "to infuse a new life

1. *AIG*, 12 January 1889, (Extracts by courtesy of Prof. Sheikh A. Rashid).
2. S. Ahmad, Unpublished Thesis, London University, pp. 256-57.
3. Chishti to Jaishi Ram, 27 July 1893, *Rafiq-i-Hind*.
4. *Dilgudaz*, April 1900, Punjab Public Library, Lahore.
5. *Ibid.*

into the dormant spirit of the National Mahomedan Association", which had been "the only political organisation worth the name throughout the length and breadth of the country for advocating the cause of our co-religionists." He commented that, "much solid work was done" when Ameer Ali was the Secretary, but at present the Association did nothing better than presenting addresses to the incoming and outgoing Governors and Viceroys.[1]

The fade-out of the Association though primarily due to the cessation of its activities after 1890, was to some extent due to the opposition of Aligarh which began to predominate the Muslim political scene. Contemporary political organisations stood eclipsed in the glare of Aligarh. Ameer Ali though a historian himself did not write a history of the Association, and was content with making brief references to it in his Memoirs. The Aligarh school of thought grudged him recognition, and consigned him and the Association to oblivion. In 1888, Sir Syed addressing the Third Muhammadan Educational Conference, thanked the Government of India for its Resolution of 1885, even made a passing reference to the Memorial but had nothing to say about the part played by Ameer Ali.[2] In 1893, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, speaking in the 8th session of the Mahommedan Education Conference at Aligarh, jibed at the demands made in the Memorial of 1882, and rather obliquely remarked, "Gentlemen! I do not know what was the Government reply to it." But he recapitulated at length the adverse comments of the English press on the Memorial.[3] He dismissed the memorial of Muslims of Sind as begging for alms. It is improbable, that the person who could expound the official objections and recount hostile newspaper criticisms of the demands of the Association, did not know of the existence of the Resolution of 1885. His description of the Association showed least accord with objectivity.

The Association continued to play its part in Muslim politics till 1890. However its real contribution cannot be judged from the very limited success but from the political consciousness generated by it, and the efforts to mobilize Muslim public opinion to obtain their rights from the Government. Muslim politics was not tied to official sufferance, but political organization was employed as an instrument for securing Muslim rights. The Association showed an independence of inspiration and initiative distinguished from contemporary Muslim organizations. No other Muslim

1. *The Moslem Chronicle*, 3 October, 1903, IOL.

2. *Majmua Lekture-Ha*, p. 223.

3. Fazal Din Kakezai, *Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Majmua Lectures wa Speeches*, Lahore, n.d., Vol. 1, pp. 212-13.

body could match it for its political dynamism. Political aims were as important as political activity. It fostered a net-work of organisations all over the country, and employed democratic methods for projecting its point of view before the English public opinion, Ameer Ali had thus devised a new political weapon. But the most significant role of the Association was that till 1906 it was the only national organization which had fostered political cooperation among Muslims of all the provinces. The Muslim majority provinces of Bengal, Sind and the Punjab were drawn closer together in a common purpose, an achievement not shared by Aligarh which had little influence in Bengal and Sind. This fact was confirmed in 1899 by Mr. Justice Shah Din speaking in the Muslim Educational Conference in Calcutta. He observed:

> That so far this conference has had little influence over the Mussulmans in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and in Central Provinces, Behar and Bengal proper, will hardly, I think, admit of a doubt....[1]

The Moslem Chronicle supported his opinion:

> Far off in Bengal very little in reality appears to be known of the teachings of the sage of Aligarh even by persons who ought to know better.[2]

Since Sir Syed was opposed to all forms of Muslim political organization, the Association alone could be considered as a prototype of the All India Muslim League. It had given the Muslims of Dacca and Lahore a sense of common destiny, and brought them together on a common political platform. In this respect, the All India Muslim League was veritably a revival of the Association. By enlarging their horizon from education to political rights, and directing political activity to well-defined politico-economic goals the Association enriched processes of thought and action which culminated in the definition of separate Muslim entity. In this manner, the Association unlocked innate dynamism of Muslim psyche and blazed a new trail in Muslim politics. If the political activity of the Association had not atrophied after 1890, the realization of separate Muslim representation would not have been delayed till 1906. However, the Association did represent a milestone in the Muslim struggle for political rights in the 19th century, and was the morning star and harbinger of the All India Muslim League.

1. *The Moslem Chronicle*, 29 December 1899.
2. *Ibid.*, 31 December 1899.

CHAPTER VII

MUSLIMS AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

On the question of participation in the Indian National Congress, established in 1885, Muslim public opinion came to be divided into pro-Congress and anti-Congress groups. These labels neither reflect the larger issues involved nor the polarization which continued to dominate the scene of Muslim politics till 1947. Hindus, Muslims, the Anglo-Indians and the Government looked at the phenomenon of Muslim opposition to the Congress from their own divergent angles.

Emergence of the Indian National Congress added a new dimension to Hindu-Muslim relationship. Since the Congress aimed at "the fusion into one national whole of all the different...elements that constitute the population of India,"[1] it could hardly accept the Muslim demand of proportionate representation in the public service, the local bodies and the legislative councils.[2] These demands had already been formulated by Muslims, and their rejection by the Congress enlarged the areas of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Muslim interests and Congress aims were not compatible. Muslim opposition to the Congress developed gradually from 1886 to 1888.

As the Congress was an enterprise of the Hindu elite and bourgeoisie,[3] it did not create a stir among Muslims who stood aloof. The Muslim absence was so conspicuous that a paper remarked that "the entire Mahomedan population of India has steadily refused to have anything to do with them is a sufficiently ominous fact". Contradicting this report, Hon'ble Mr. Telang, a Congress leader agreed that Muslims were not 'adequately represented', but even then four leading Muslims attended the Congress.[4] He hoped that the deficiency in Muslim representation would be made up in its second session. Hence it was decided to secure the co-

1. 'Hume's speech at Allahabad', 30 April 1888, cited in C. H. Philips, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

2. For a fuller discussion see chapter VIII, infra.

3. The members of the Congress were drawn from lawyers, school teachers and editors. *Times Weekly*, 5 February 1886, cited in *Source Material for a History of Indian Freedom Movement*, Bombay, Vol. II, p. 21.

4. *Ibid.* They were Mr. Sayani, Mr. Dharamsi, Mr. Badruddin Tyabji, Mr. Cummruddin Tyabji.

operation of leaders like Sir Syed, Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali.

In November 1886, Hume, prime mover of the Congress, took the initiative to invite Sir Syed to join the Congress.[1] Instead of replying to his letter directly, Sir Syed preferred to discuss the question in his paper.[2] In turn, Hume also resorted to the press, and there developed a heated controversy between them. Assuring Sir Syed of his personal regard, Hume stated that for no other Indian he had "cherished stronger feelings of respect and regard" than for him, and entertained "absolute certainty" about his "ability and integrity". But now he was pained that a man like him should "be opposed to the gradual introduction of a principle of representation into the Government."[3] Appealing to Sir Syed's sense of loyalty, Hume impressed upon him that Dufferin was favourably disposed towards the Congress which the Viceroy thought could be used:

> "firstly . . . to chasten and sober the aspirations of the more enthusiastic amongst ourselves, and secondly, in conveying to the Government, with certain degree of authority, a knowledge of what the country is at the time chiefly thinking about and mainly desiring".[4]

Hume assumed that even though Dufferin had not "pronounced any formal opinion,[5] about the time and extent of representative institutions he was not opposed to the establishment of such institutions. If conducted in "good temper loyally." Dufferin was supposed to countenance agitation for this cause. Since Dufferin did not disapprove of "our modern national political movement", but on the contrary held "it to be the glorious proof of our fidelity", it was "indeed inexplicable" that Sir Syed should have elected to oppose the Congress. Hume was baffled:

> But Syed Ahmed did, I was reliably assured dislike and disapprove of our main measures and objects, and yet he is unquestionably both able and honest. How were such contradictions to be reconciled.[6]

Hume surmised that perhaps, Sir Syed had "not studied *The Star in the East*"[7] carefully to realise that the country had set its heart on represen-

1. "Mr. Hume and the Allyghur Gazette", letter to the Editor by A. O. Hume, *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 18 December, 1886, IOL. (I have not been able to trace Hume's original letter).

2. *Ibid.* This letter was published in *AIG*, 23 November 1886.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 18 December 1886.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.* Sir Syed regarded this Congress pamphlet as highly objectionable, inflammatory, and even seditious. See Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-12.

tative institutions as an initial reform. How could Sir Syed now condemn those ideas which "are his own and not ours".[1]

Hume clinched his argument in another open letter in which he sought to correct Sir Syed's misconceptions which did not seem to him to be involuntary. Sir Syed had misconstrued "*The Star in the East*" otherwise the demand for the establishment of representative institutions in no way amounted to the setting up of a parliament in India. Hume affirmed that "all our leading reformers from Mr. Dadabhai Nowroji downwards, it has been emphatically stated that this country is *not* prepared for Pailiamentary Government".[2] Dismissing Sir Syed's contention that suitably qualified persons were not available to represent the people, he accused him for having substituted for the Congress views "vain imaginings of his own". Hume refuted the allegation "that the promoters of the present movement either know very little about Parliaments, or very little about India."[3] How could this charge be true, when men like Dadabhai Nowroji, Lall Mohun Ghose, Monmohun Ghose, and Sir W. Wedderburn who knew the Parliament better than Sir Syed were supporting the Congress. In fact, Sir Syed himself knew very little "about the subject on which he so dogmatically pronounces".[4] Then, Hume refuted Sir Syed's three main objections. Sir Syed's had asked, "Can qualified members of Parliament be found". Hume countered that Sir Syed, "despite his want of familiarity with the English language could be a suitable member of an Indian Parliament." But no one had "proposed a Parliament, or members for it in India as yet". Parliament was a "distant goal", it was "the far off hill-top"[5] towards which India would move in the next two or three generations. At best the Congress was looking for about 60 "able, sensible, independent Councillors," who even though over-ruled could not be ignored. "They would not *govern*, the Government would rest in the same hands in which it now does".[6] This controversy stimulated public interest in the issue of Muslim participation in the Congress.

While Sir Syed versus Hume controversy was simmering in the press, the organizers of the second Congress invited the Muslim leaders of Bengal. Syed Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif consulted the working committees

1. *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 18 December 1886.

2. "Mr. Hume and Syed Ahmed of Alighur," letter to the Editor, by A.O. Hume, 19 December 1886. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid*

of their organizations and formulated replies on their behalf. The Central National Mahomedan Association declined the Congress invitation and set forth the reasons of its refusal in a letter which was released to the press,[1] and sent to the Congress[2] simultaneously by Syed Ameer Ali. The line of argument adopted by the Central National Mahomedan Association was different from that of Sir Syed. The rejection of the Congress by Sir Syed and the Central National Mahomedan Association confirmed the view, that the Congress "has not taken such hold of the convictions, or the imagination, of the Mahomedan community as to awaken any very great sympathy therewith as a whole."[3] Syed Ameer Ali affirmed:

> The committee of the Central National Mahomedan Association are satisfied that no good can result from any attempt to force the hands of the Government on these important questions....The Committee note that among the more important questions set down for discussion at the coming Congress are (1) the necessity for a more economical administration of the Empire and (2) a larger employment in the public service of the people of India. In reference to both these points the Committee observe the Viceroy has taken an effective step by the appointment of committees of enquiry to form a correct judgment, and the Committee think it inadvisable at this stage to formulate them as demands.
>
> Finally, the Committee cannot ignore that Her Majesty's Government has already promised a parliamentary enquiry into the workings of the Indian administration, and it seems to us that we should be impeding rather than advancing the public interests by taking any step calculated to precipitate a judgment on these questions. At the same time, in order to avoid any misconstruction, the Committee desire me to add that the Central National Mahomedan Association and its branches representing the Indian Mahomedans have as much at heart as any other public body of the people of this country, and they fully appreciate the necessity on the part of the Government to widen and liberalize the administration of India, but this committee think no possible advantage will result either to their community or the country at large by assuming an attitude of uneasiness towards the

1. Ameer Ali to the Editor. *Ibid.*
2. Ameer Ali to the Secretaries of the National Congress, 12 December 1886. *Ibid.*
3. 'Editorial', 23 December 1886. *Ibid.*

> Government and the steps it has taken and intends to take, in order to achieve the objects we have in view.[1]

Unlike Sir Syed, the Central National Mahomedan Association displayed a sense of moderation in its opposition to the Congress, and did not get involved in any polemics. They approved of the enlargement of Legislative Councils, but could afford to wait for it.

> The Mahomedans see that they have not much to gain from the success of the national programme. They are not in a hurry for political concessions.[2]

Since Hindu sense of urgency for reform did not coincide with Muslim political priorities, the Association decided to eschew the Congress. Though not willing to retard the growth of Muslim political awareness the Association did not want to force the pace of political process in comparatively backward Muslim society. With regard to its memorial, the Association had experience enough of the vociferous opposition of Bengal Hindu press[3] and had not forgotten "the strictures of Hindu newspapers of Calcutta"[4] on Syed Amir Husain's appointment to the Viceroy's Legislative Council. Now it could not entrust Muslim representation to a body dominated by the same Hindu elements. The Anjuman-i-Islamiya, Madras, passed a vote of confidence in the Association.[5] Like the Muslim League later on, the Association controverted the Congress claims of being a national organization and asserted to be the truly representative Muslim political body in the country. Here the Association stood distinguished from Sir Syed who opposed the Congress in his individual capacity. Though Sir Syed disputed the quantum of Muslim participation in the Congress as minimal, he did not lay claim to represent the Indian Muslims through any political organization.

At the same time, the Mahomedan Literary Society, under the leadership of Nawab Abdul Latif, conveyed its decision to the press that they did not consider the participation in the Congress conducive to the Muslim interests.[6] Thus both the leading Muslim organizations stood to boycott

1. Ameer Ali to the Secretaries of the Indian National Congress Reception Committee 12 December 1886, *The Times of India*, 24 December 1886. See also *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 19 December 1886.

2. *The Indian Spectator*, cited in *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 30 December 1886.

3. *Shafiq-i-Hind*, Lahore, 8 May 1886, cited in *NWPNR.*, 1886, IOL.

4. *Hindustan*, (Kalakanker), 23 July 1886, cited in *Ibid.*

5. *Muslim Herald*, 4 January 1887, cited by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, Appendix, pp. v-vi.

6. Nawab Abdul Latif to Peary Mohun Mookerjee and J. Goshal, Members of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress, 22 December 1886, *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 24 December 1886.

the Congress, and claimed to represent the Muslims of Bengal.

The Congress did not leave unchallenged the claim of these Associations to represent the Bengali Muslims. A section of the Anglo-Indian press, for reasons of its own, joined the issue on the Congress side. A fictitious Muslim supporter of the Congress writing under the name of Maulvi Abdus Salam M.A. repudiated the decision of the Central National Mahomedan Association, and accused Syed Ameer Ali who "with the consent of a certain of his clique"[1] and without consulting the members had taken the questionable decision to abstain from the Congress. Three days later the same bogus critic fired a salvo at Syed Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif and alleged:

> The Secretaries have preferred to incur the indignation of the whole people rather than to meet the displeasure of a few officials, I do not find any other cause for their dissent, than that they are afraid, if they join the Congress, the favours which the Government has shown the Mahomedans recently will be at stake.[2]

Significantly this letter has since served as prototype of Congress propaganda against its Muslim opponents, who were dubbed as instruments of English bureaucracy and the enemies of representative institutions. Opposition to the Congress was made to appear as opposition to spirit of freedom and democracy. On the basis of these letters, *The Statesman and Friend of India* raised a controversy, questioned the steps taken by Syed Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif "to ascertain the view of the community," and expressed "a strong presumption against their having done[3] so". Syed Ameer Ali debunked these letters as forgery, and affirmed that the Central National Mahomedan Association was unanimous in its opposition to the Congress:

> The Committee have no desire to enter into a newspaper controversy as to the wisdom or unwisdom of their present abstention from the Congress, but they fear that such letters will not further any object which some of the best Hindoos in common with all the best Mahomedans have at heart—the promotion of concord and harmony between the two races.[4]

The next day, Abdus Salam, secretary of the Rajshahi branch, repudiated this fictitious letter which had been mischievously attributed to him, and

1. *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 25 December, 1886.
2. *Ibid.*, 28 December, 1886,
3. 'Editorial' in *Ibid.*
4. Amir Ali to the Editor, 29 December, 1886, *Ibid.*

denounced it as 'a most dishonest and mean device.'[1] He advised the Congress that it should not stoop to the use of 'insidious means', and affirmed that the decision to abstain from the Congress had been taken by the Rajshahi branch even before the receipt of Syed Ameer Ali's letter asking for their views. Expressing solidarity of the Rajshahi Muslims with the leadership of the Association, he deplored the effort of the forger to set him against Syed Ameer Ali "for whose public spirit and patriotic efforts in the interests of the community I entertain a genuine respect". The editor of *The Statesman* was constrained to dismiss the forged letters as 'a silly hoax", which was calculated to divert public attention from the serious grounds taken by Mr. Amir Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif,"[2] Nevertheless, editor had the temerity to accuse them of "abusing their powers as secretaries of the associations . . . to commit their members publicly to a course of conduct, which . . . majority of their members disapprove." Ameer Ali's rejoinder was ignored and the editor insisted on his "strong assurance that the members do not approve the action that has been taken, professedly in their name."[3] Castigating them for having issued "a public manifesto expressing their disapproval"[4] in reply to the private Congress invitation, the editor questioned "their want of sympathy for a movement which bears the stamp of nationality upon its face".[5] The Anglo-Indian press played a disreputable role. On the one hand it sought to discredit the Central National Mahomedan Association and the Mahomedan Literary Society as paper organizations not representing Muslims, and on the other hand played up Muslim abstention from the Congress.[6] Who represented the Muslims? Since the Muslims had abstained, whom did the Congress represent? These questions were too irksome to the answered honesty. In a Bismarckian style the Anglo-Indian press assumed the role of an honest broker between the Hindus and Muslims; as it was no less perturbed over the emergence of Hindu political solidarity under the Congress, than it was upset over the growing Muslim consensus against the Congress. The Anglo-Indian papers pleased the Muslim less and irritated the Hindu more.

Muslims all over India vindicated Sir Syed's verdict and endorsed the decision of the Muslim Associations of Bengal. Despite hectic

1. *Ibid.*, Abdus Salam, M. A., to the Editor, 30 December 1886.
2. *Ibid.*, 31 December 1886.
3. *Ibid.*, 30 December 1886.
4. *Ibid.*, 31 December 1886.
5. *Ibid.*, 30 December 1886.
6. *The Times* attributed the Muslim abstention from the Congress to their "haughty reserve", *The Times*, Weekly edition, 5 February 1886, cited in *Source Material for a History of Indian Freedom Movement*, Vol. II, p. 17.

Congress efforts, Muslim participation in the second Congress session was nothing better than nominal. A statistical analysis would be more revealing.[1]

Province	No. of Delegates	No. of Muslim Delegates
Madras	50	1
C. P.	11	1
Bihar	31	6
Bombay	45	2
N. W. P. and Oudh	74	6
The Punjab	17	Nil
Bengal	209	17

Though the Congress Session was held in Calcutta, not a single Muslim delegate represented Muslims of the metropolis.[2] Muslims of Calcutta who were in the vanguard of Muslim political awakening followed the lead of the Central National Mahomedan Association and the Mahomedan Literary Society. Muslim press acclaimed the stand taken by these Associations, but Hindu press vented its indignation against them. *Rafiq-i-Hind* commented, "Hindus would be mistaken if they think that Musalmans will continue to take part in political agitation as before. Musalmans have already discovered that their interests are quite distinct from those of Hindus."[3]

Syed Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif despite their mutual differences were united in their opposition to the Congress, and their attitude was symbolic of the Muslim solidarity on this issue. *Rafiq-i-Hind* observed:

> The two Muhammadan bodies never worked in unison with each other but it is a sign of the times that one has been able to follow the example of the other in such an important matter.[4]

The impact of Syed Ameer Ali's decision was not restricted to Bengal, but set the pace for Muslims all over the sub-continent. A Hindu paper wrote:

> The publication of Mr. Amir Ali's letter induced Mussalmans in other parts of the country to keep aloof.[5]

Testifying this *Bharat Bandhu* complained, Hindus were no less loyal than Muslims. It attributed Muslim boycott of the Congress to Govern-

1. "Report of the Second Congress, 1886" cited in *Ibid.*, Appendix I, pp. 113-39.
2. *Ibid.*, Few Bengali Muslim delegates came from the mofussil.
3. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 25 December 1886, cited in *BNNR* 1887.
4. *Ibid.*, 1 January, 1887, cited in *Ibid.*
5. *Bharat Bandhu*, Aligarh, January 1887, cited in *Ibid.*

ment's policy of showing "undue indulgence" to Muslims in the public service,[1] and encouraging them to adopt a hostile attitude towards the Congress. The same hypothesis was advertised by *The Tribune* which blamed the British officials who "were most anxious to keep the Mahomedans aloof from the Congress".[2] Singling out the Central National Mahomedan Association and the Mahomedan Literary Society as the targets of its wrath, it castigated them:

> It is inconceivable to us how the two Associations, . . . could for a moment have brought themselves to believe that these hazy and uncompromising hints of special favour to be shown to that community at some future time not specified, were thrown out except to delude them from their eventual detriment. The Government of India beyond publishing a resolution on the state of education among the Indian Mahomedans, has not taken one single step to better their condition. We were therefore, surprised to find the two Mahomedan Associations of Calcutta preparing for a political suicide, such as their holding back from the National Congress would certainly have involved.[3]

Playing down the identity of views between these Associations *the Hindoo Patriot* commented worryly:

> Nawab Abdul Latif's party has, as a matter of course, followed Mr. Amir Ali suit in refusing to join the Congress.[4]

Muslims of Calcutta were condemned for their "unwise course" as they were playing the "role of loyalists as against Hindoo disaffection." They were being "encouraged in their foolish game" by Englishmen like Sir William Gregory[5] who attempted "to set Hindoos and Mahomedans by the ear and try to ruin one with the aid of the other."[6] The paper deplored the stand taken by the Muslim Associations of Calcutta.

> Regretting as we do, the mistaken position taken up by the Mahomedans, Centralists, Literaturists, we have this consolation that all Mahomedans were not so disposed.[7]

1. *Ibid.*
2. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 5 January, 1887, IOL.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *The Hindoo Patriot*, Calcutta, 27 December, 1887, IOL.
5. *Ibid.* He was the former governor of Ceylon, who after a tour of India in 1886 wrote in *The Nineteenth Century*, an article which was so blatantly hostile to the Hindus, that it was criticized by the *Pioneer*. See *The Pioneer*, 30 December 1886, IOL.
6. *The Hindoo Patriot*, *op. cit.*, 27 December, 1887, IOL.
7. *Ibid.*

Who were those Muslims who assured the Congress of general Muslim support? These questions have to be answered fully. How far did the Congress succeed in securing Muslim adherence? Since its inception, the Congress leaders had been conscious of Muslim abstention, and W. C. Bonnerji wished very much that the Bengali Muslims were "better disposed towards the Congress."[1] In order to uphold the national character of the Congress, the microcosm of pro-Congress Muslims had to be enlarged, and a pro-Congress Muslim leader found to counter the influence of Sir Syed, Syed Ameer Ali, and Nawab Abdul Latif, leaders of the anti-Congress Muslim majority. The Congress, chose Badruddin Tyabji, a successful barrister, an upright leader who was widely respected by Muslims of Bombay, for his sagacity, liberality and spirit of service. "To gain a step in advance over the last Congress."[2] Dadabhai Naoroji pressed Badruddin Tyabji to preside over the next Congress. Hume assured him that the Congress Standing Committee was "unanimous in their desire" that he should preside over the Madras session, as he was considered "not only the best, but the only possible man for the post."[3] Since a Hindu, and a Parsi had already presided over the Congress, it was both politic and urgent that now a Muslim should be chosen for this honour. Hussain B. Tyabji writes about his father, "all eyes therefore, turned to Badruddin". The field was clear, "as no Muslim leader had till then opposed the Congress" and even Sir Syed "had not yet opened his mouth against the Congress."[4] Hussain Tyabji's assertion would be valid if all that Sir Syed wrote against the Congress in 1886, is forgotten and if Syed Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif's formal rejection of the Congress is consigned to the limbo. At last, Badruddin Tayabji made his choice in favour of the Congress, and rejected Ameer Ali's invitation to join the proposed Muslim political conference.[5] Now the Congress had found a Muslim leader to coalesce its pro-Congress Muslim supporters into a parallel front against the anti-Congress movement. Generally, Muslims construed it as a design against their national solidarity and reacted sharply. In this manner, Hindus and Muslims were arrayed against each other in a political confrontation charged with rancour, and poisoned by recrimination, engulfing all the

1. W. C. Bonnerji to Badruddin Tyabji, 1 December 1886, Husain B. Tyabji, *Badruddin Tyabji*, Bombay, 1952, p. 178.

2. Dadabhai Naoroji to Badruddin Tyabji, 20 October 1887, *Ibid.*, p. 180.

3. A. O. Hume to Badruddin Tyabji, 2 December 1887, *Ibid.*, p. 181.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

5. Ameer Ali to Badruddin Tyabji, 28 November 1887, *Ibid.*, p. 179.

frontiers of Hindu-Muslim relationship; and eroding away areas of existing amity and concord between them.

In his presidential address, Badruddin Tyabji took pains, to dispell the misconception that the Muslims had not identified themselves with the Congress, and affirmed that his main reason for presiding over the Congress session was to prove that he was not participating in his individual capacity, but as a representative of the Anjuman-i-Islam. He considered that mutual relations between the different communities of India should not induce "the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those general rights which are for the common benefit of us all . . ."[1] His participation was meant to symbolize Muslim identification with the Congress. In an attempt to counterbalance the influence of the Muslim Associations of Bengal, he claimed to represent the Anjuman-i-Islam Bombay. But soon after the Anjuman questioned his role in the Congress.[2]

Despite Badruddin Tyabji's broader vision and moderation, Hindu communalistic tendencies in the Congress could not be kept under check. Raja Sashi Sekhareswar Roy, a Hindu feudal lord of Bengal, "gave notice of a resolution urging the prohibition of cow-slaughter." Some moderate Congressmen styled this resolution as 'inopportune',[3] but it could have hardly inspired confidence among Muslims, and almost brought down the facade of Hindu-Muslim unity so sedulously built up by the Congress. Confirming Muslim fears it revealed the existence of an ultra-Hindu nationalism. However Badruddin Tyabji managed to block the passage of this resolution and introduced his own resolution proposing that "no subject could be introduced for discussion which was objected to unanimously or nearly unanimously by any community."[4] In this way he succeeded in papering over the cracks in the Congress but could draw little satisfaction from the poor Muslim response to the Congress. The Congress had strained "every nerve to secure the cooperation of our Mahomedan fellow countrymen" and even "sometimes paid the fares of Mahomedan delegates and offered them other facilities,"[5] but the number of Muslim delegates to the Madras Congress brought nothing but disappointment to Badruddin Tyabji and other Congress leaders. That the Muslim participation had not improved would be clear from the following

1. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
3. Surendranath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
4. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 188. This resolution was adopted in 1888.
5. Surendranath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

table[1] showing the comparative strength of Muslim delegates in relation to non-Muslims.

Name of Province	Total No. of Delegates	Muslim Delegates
Madras	361	56
Bombay (none from Sindh)	100	9
C. P.	13	2
N. W. P. and Oudh	45	7
The Punjab	9	1
Bengal (including Lower Provinces and Bihar)	79	1
	607	76

Out of 76 Muslim delegates, 56 were mustered from Madras Presidency, and only 20 delegates came from other provinces, and not all of them held clear credentials. Perhaps some of them had showed up for reasons other than political, and were either interested in financial gain or personal renown so lavishly bestowed upon them by the Congress. Surely, Sir Syed was on very firm ground when he contended that it was "inappropriate and absurd" to describe such men as Muslim delegates.

> Not ten Mahomedans came together to elect any of those Mahomedans who went.[2]

How could then the Congress be truly national? Again there arose the question, who represented the Muslims?

Badruddin Tyabji took upon himself the duty of meeting the objections[3] of Muslim leaders and bringing them into the Congress fold. In the meantime, Sir Syed felt that the time had come to formulate opposition to the Congress into a political creed for Muslims at large. Ameer Ali was then contemplating the establishment of an All India Muslim Political Conference. Badruddin Tyabji, Sir Syed, and Ameer Ali symbolized three divergent attitudes towards the Congress and the interplay of their views represented a wide spectrum of Muslim political opinion. Clash of their opinions and personalities generated multi-faceted tensions and controversies within the Muslim society.

1. "Report of the Third Congress", *Source Material for a History of Indian Freedom Movement*, Appendix 1.

2. Sir Syed Ahmed's reply to Badruddin Tyabji, *The Pioneer* cited by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, 1888, p. 58, BM.

3. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

Badruddin Tyabji and pro-Congress Muslims

As leader of the pro-Congress Muslims Badruddin Tyabji was determined to enlarge the Congress influence among his co-religionists. Soon after his return to Bombay, in January 1888, he decided to get "into touch with the other Mahomedan leaders,"[1] in order to popularize the Congress among them. Like others he did not ascribe Muslim abstention entirely to British machinations but conceded some of the reasonable and moderate objections raised by the anti-Congress Muslim leaders. Though inclined to shrug off some of their apprehensions as "vague and indefinite",[2] he felt the necessity of setting at rest the commonly expressed Muslim fear of domination by a Hindu majority. He admitted that some of these fears were not altogether unjustified.

> Nevertheless there was a *bonafide* and genuine ground for the fear that if power was vested in the majority, the majority would consist of Hindus and they might override the interests of Mahomedans.[3]

For assuring Muslim minority, or for that matter any other minority, that they would not be exposed to the danger of domination by a Hindu majority in the Congress, he was anxious to incorporate a guarantee in the Congress constitution. Hume backed him and acknowledged that "an apprehension lurked that Hindus being numerically strongest, might at some time, press and carry in the Congress some Resolution directly hostile to Mahomedan interests."[4] Muslims felt that the anti-cow-slaughter resolution introduced during the last Congress, was "summarily put out of court"[5] due to the intervention of a Muslim president, but the situation could take a more serious turn in future under a non-Muslim president. Accordingly, Hume drafted a rule that no subject should be taken up by the Congress "which the Hindu or Muhamedan delegates as a body, object unanimously or nearly unanimously."[6] Badruddin Tyabji approved of the proposed rule and was assured by several leading Muslims that "such a rule if accepted would promptly obviate all remaining difficulties in the way of hearty cooperation in the movement."[7] In presenting it before the Congress Standing Committee, Badruddin Tyabji enlarged its scope and suggested:

1. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
3. *Ibid.*
4. A. O. Hume to the Secretary of the Standing Congress Committee, 5 January, 1888, *Tyabji Papers*, *T-939*, Microfilm Reel No. 2. SOAS.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

It was also necessary that the right to ask for its enforcement should be vested in the community itself which had an objection.[1]

Subsequently the draft resolution was circulated among the various standing committees of the Congress. Some members argued that such a resolution was unnecessary since the Congress as a national body was conscious that its resolutions would carry little 'weight with the Government,' if not supported by Muslims. Ironically, considerable number of Hindu members opposed it for fear of Muslim domination.

There were others however who were opposed to the rule because of their fear that if such a rule was passed, they would be confronted with the danger that a contingent of Mahomedans from the North-West Frontier and Oudh might swamp the Congress under the directions of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who might oppose the introduction of representative institutions and undo all the work already done by the Congress. Curiously it was observed that this fear was entertained as much by the Mahomedans as by the Hindus.[2]

Anxious for national image of the Congress; most Hindu leaders did not show their misgivings about Muslims. The ambivalent Congress attitude towards Muslims ranging from love to hatred prevented the growth of mutual confidence between the major communities. Most Hindu leaders of the Congress sought Muslim support for their predetermined political goals but would not allow Muslims to compromise Hindu majority in a future representative government by letting them to work against it from within the Congress. For this reason a "rider clause was added to the rule that it did not affect resolutions which had already been passed after full discussion."[3] This was done to secure its passage by the different committees of the Congress.

Now the stage was set to invite the Muslim leaders to join the Congress fold. On 13 January 1888, Badruddin Tyabji wrote to Sir Syed, Syed Ameer Ali, Nawab Abdul Latif, Mehdi Ali (later Mohsin-ul-Mulk).[4] Perhaps at that time he had not read Sir Syed's Lucknow speech of 28 December 1887, which was not published[5] in Bombay papers till 17 January 1888. In his letter to Sir Syed, Tyabji regretted that Muslims had abstained from identifying themselves with "matters affecting all India as a whole", and thereby retarded "the national progress

1. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
2. Hume to Badruddin Tyabji, 29 February 1888, cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 192-93.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
5. *Ibid.*

of India as a whole". Since the Congress did not desire 'to subject the Mussalmans to the Hindus,' he that if ever it was proposed 'to vest the executive power in the Hindus to the detriment of the Mussalmans, he should oppose it with all his strength".[1] He then asked for his comments about the rule.

> Please let me know what you think of it, and also whether you object to any Congress at all in any shape or form, or only to a Congress which may possibly prejudice our community.[2]

The letters to Syed Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif, presumably,[3] followed a similar line of argument. But they did not send any reply.[4]

In the meantime, Mehdi Ali Mohsin-ul-Mulk, wrote to Badruddin Tyabji congratulating him for his 'admirable speech'[5] as Congress president but evinced no interest ni Congress aims. He also recalled his association with Hume who had been kind to him in his official career. Replying to this personal letter, Badruddin Tyabji acknowledged that considerable misapprehension still prevailed regarding the Congress aims. This misunderstanding arose "partly from ignorance, partly from prejudice and partly from direct hostility to the advancement of natives of this country".[6] Muslims could discuss their problems in provincial or sectional associations, but should cooperate with other communities in the Congress on "questions of great and vital importance" which affected every community, such as taxation, legislation, system of education and budget. He wrote:

> I am utterly at a loss to understand why the Mahomedans should not work jointly with other communities. If under the pretence of promoting the *general* good of India, some proposition is brought forward *which is likely to prejudice our interests as a community*, surely we can *shut it out* from the Congress *by opposing it as a body* upon the principle I have already stated .... In other words, we can make our opposition *far more* effective *from within than from without*, the Congress. This is the provision on which I have always acted and I confess I cannot understand the reasons which have induced our

1. *Ibid.*, this is a paraphrase of Badruddin Tyabji's letter. I could not trace the original letter and had to be content with its last portion cited by his biographer.

2. Badruddin Tyabji to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, 13 January 1888, cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 194-95.

3. These letters have not been reproduced by Hussin B. Tyabji and are not traceable in the *Tyabji Papers*.

4. Husain, B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

5. Mehdi Ali to Badruddin Tyabji, 10 February 1888, *Tyabji Papers*.

6. Badruddin Tyabj to Mehdi Ali, 19 January 1888, *Ibid.* It seems, Husain Tyabji misread 19 January for 14 January, see, Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

> friends like Ameer Ali, Abdul Latif Khan and Syad (*sic*) Ahmad Khan to stand aloof from the Congress. I am very much afraid that their abstention is due not so much to conviction, as to a desire to stand well with the Government. I have put myself in communication with them with a view to see whether it is not possible to put an end to this unseemly disagreement, not only between the Mussalmans and the Hindus of Bengal but even between the Mussalmans of one Presidency and those of another.[1]

Mohsin-ul-Mulk cut short this discussion and broke off writing to Badruddin Tyabji.

In the meantime, a struggle was afoot as to who should direct the Congress. Two groups: the moderate Congressmen, the ultra Hindus, were the most likely candidates for Congress leadership. Since most of Muslims were already on the other side of the Congress fence, the battle was joined by the moderate Congressmen and the ultra Hindus. Badruddin Tyabji and Hume had found it difficult to secure the acceptance of their draft rule even with a rider, and had to undertake a lot of backstage manoeuverings to push it through against the ultra Hindu opposition. Some Muslim members like Raza Husain of Lucknow added to their difficulties by proposing that Hindus and Muslims should be represented in equal numbers in the Councils.[2] Hume suggested that the Congress in its next session should pass some rules that the Government should always "so arrange by nominations" that the number of Hindu and Muslim members to the Councils be "as nearly possible" be made equal. This was a generous proposal. Hume had hoped that it would be backed up by the Congress committees of Madras, Oudh and N. W. P., and the Punjab, "and probably Bihar".[3] Hume sounded too optimistic, but his silence about the attitude of Congress Committees of Bombay and Bengal betrayed his apprehensions of ultra-Hindu domination of those bodies. His high expectations were soon belied by the stiff Hindu opposition and no such rule was adopted by the Congress.

With Sir Syed's reply to Badruddin Tyabji there started between them a controversy which was both unpleasant and prolonged. Sir Syed thanked Badruddin Tyabji for congratulating him on his knighthood. This was the end of polite sentiments, the rest of the letter was nothing but a harsh

1. *Ibid.*, (italicized as in the original).

2. Raza Husain of Anjuman Rifah-i-'Aam, Lucknow to Badruddin Tyabji, 9 May 1888, *Tyabji Papers*.

3. *Ibid.* A. O. Hume to Badruddin Tyabji, 5 November 1888.

rebutta of the Congress. Since Sir Syed had no new reason for his abstention from the Congress, Badruddin Tyabji need not have been surprised. Sir Syed retsorted:

> We do not mean to 'retard the National progress of India' or 'to prevent other people from enjoying rights for which they are qualified', and even if we try to do so we cannot hope to succeed; but at the same time it is not obligatory on our part to run a race with persons with whom we have no chance of success.[1]

Since the very basis of Congress nationalism was not compatible with Muslim political aims, there was no common ground for a political cooperation. His rejection of the Congress was categorical:

> I object to every Congress in every shape or form whatever which regards India as one nation on account of its being based on wrong principles viz. that it regards the whole of India as one Nation.[2]

Before writing again to Sir Syed, Badruddin waited for the replies of his letters he had "addressed to other leading Mussalman gentlemen in different parts of India".[3] But he was disappointed. At last on 18th January 1888, he wrote to Sir Syed on the whole a placid letter which at places did betray an under current of irritation. Trying "to ascertain if possible whether and by what means we can act in harmony for the common benefit of the Mussalman community," he showed his genuine concern about the existing situation. He urged upon him that it was "the duty of all of us to understand each other thoroughly . . . and by mutual concessions to bring about a common course of action."[4] Upholding the Congress as an organization of "educated people from all parts of India and representing all races and creeds" which sought to discuss "only such questions as may be generally admitted to concern the whole of India at large", he asked was it "desirable that there should be a conference of people of this description."[5] Such an organization was needed, though it was a different issue that it should or should not discuss matters pertaining to a particular community or a province. No one would object to a Congress of this kind unless he was convinced that the different communities were not touched by common problems. Dispelling Sir Syed's misconception that he ever took India to be one nation, he referred to his presidential address in which he had "distinctly stated that there are numerous communities or nations in India

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. Badruddin Tyabji to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, 18 February 1888. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

which had peculiar problems of their own to solve."[1] But the existence of separate communal problems did not exclude inter-communal cooperation. Sir Syed had alleged in his Lucknow speech that the Congress was a Bengali Hindu enterprise. Tyabji repudiated these insinuations and affirmed that Hindus supported the Congress "unanimously and as a body",[2] and it also enjoyed the cooperation of the Muslims of Bombay and Madras. Opposition by Muslims of Bengal and N. W. Provinces would also be overcome by removing the causes of their differences with the Congress. He advocated that the Muslims could protect their rights by joining the Congress:

> "And my strong conviction is that the Mussalmans can by united action confine the Congress to such topics as they may deem desirable and safe for discussion. Take for instance the question of Legislative Councils. If the Mussalmans as a body do not like that members should be elected they could easily modify the proposition so as to suit their own interests. My policy therefore, would be to act from *within* rather than from *without*. I would say to all Mussalmans, 'act with your Hindu fellow-subjects in all matters in which you are agreed but oppose them as strongly as you can if they bring forward any propositions that you may deem prejudicial to yourselves."[3]

How would the Hindu majority allow the Muslim minority to work from within the Congress on questions like Urdu-Hindi controvery was not explained. In good faith, Badruddin Tyabji had taken too many things for granted.

Sir Syed did not answer Badruddin Tyabji's letter,[4] but instead criticised his policies in a public speech in Meerut, on 16 March 1888. With all deference, Sir Syed asserted that Badruddin Tyabji was the only eminent Muslim to have participated in the Madras Congress. Replying to the points raised by Tyabji that the things detrimental to Muslim interests be pointed out to him so that he could get them excluded from discussion in the Congress session, he retorted that the Congress in all its aspects was unsuitable for Muslim community.[5] Badruddin Tyabji's personal opinions could not be taken to represent the whole nation, and his support for the Congress was not tantamount to Muslim approval of the Congress. Sir Syed also challenged the representative character of Congress Muslim delegates like Prince Hummayun Jah.[6]

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
5. *Ibid.*, See also the original speech: Munshi Siraj-ud-Din Ahmad, *Majmua' Lecture-Hai Hon'ble Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, pp. 254-67.
6. *Ibid.*, 256.

Now Badruddin Tyabji felt constrained to resort to the press and in a letter to *the Pioneer*, reiterated:

> The principle on which the Congress has been worked is that only such questions of general interest affecting the whole of India at large should be brought forward in regard to which there is either absolute or at least practical unanimity on the part of the Hindus and Musalmans.[1]

This principle had been finally accepted by the twelve standing committees of the Congress.[2] He hoped that now Muslim fears would be removed and they would cooperate with Hindus for the general interests of the country.

In a rejoinder to Badruddin Tyabji, Sir Syed expressed his gratification that those questions on which either the provinces, or the Hindus and Muslims "were not practically agreed", were excluded from consideration during the last Congress. How could the Congress profess to be truly national, if any resolution "could be carried against the unanimous protest" of either the Hindu or Muslim delegates-[sic].[3] Challenging the representative character of the so-called Muslim delegates from the N. W. Provinces, he asserted that not even ten persons gathered together to elect them, and there were not even ten Muslim *Raises* or men of the middle class who knew the aims of the Congress in the districts they claimed to represent. Some of the delegates on their admission were elected by the Hindus. Sir Syed rejected the Congress as a national body. Since Hindu and Muslim aims were divergent, and the Congress did not prescribe any solution for them, what should be done. He posed a question:

> Should Mahomedans and Hindus each have their own Congress for their special objects in which they differ from one another?[4]

Answering his own question, he maintained that such "Congresses will go on fighting each other to death,[5]" and one nation could not be created on basis of ever-diminishing areas of agreement between Hindus and Muslims. Since the draft rule envisaged by the Congress to exclude subjects repugnant to Hindus or Muslims as a body would not cover any common political

1. Badruddin Tyabji to *Tne Pioneer*, 2 April 1888, cited by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, (Allahabad, 1888), p. 54.
2. *Ibid.* p. 55.
3. Sir Syed Ahmad's reply to Badruddin Tyabji, n.d., cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 57-62.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
5. *Ibid.*

ground it could at best be used to achieve harmony on social questions dividing Hindus and Muslims. In the interest of social amity, he was willing to preside over a Congress with social aims, but was opposed to a political Congress as a matter of principle.[1] But in political matters, Muslims from the highest to the lowest were united that they would never accept subordination of another nation, and would never "consent to work for our own fall."[2] The Congress demand for having elected members to the Viceroy's Legislative Council was detrimental to Muslim interests, for "whatever system of election be adopted there will be four times as many Hindus as Mahomedans . . . and the power of legislation over the whole country will be in the hands of Bengalis or Hindus of Bengali type, and the Mahomedans will fall into a condition of utmost degradation."[3] It was inexpedient for Muslims to join the Congress which was accusing the "Government before the crowds of common men of withholding rights from her subjects". Since such a propaganda could be easily misconstrued by the ignorant Muslims who would come to believe that the Government was really "tyrannical or at least unjust", they would suffer more for their rash action than the Hindus, as happened after 1857.[4]

In comparison with Badruddin's restraint and courtesy, Sir Syed's arguments were tinged with sophistry, and his diction was more often ironic. Realising that there would never be any common ground between them, Badruddin Tyabji withdrew from this exchange of polemics in the press, and their correspondence ceased altogether. But he did not give up. Perhaps for the last time, he tried to influence Sir Syed through "Theodore Beck, Principal of the Aligarh College—a person who exercised much influence on Syed Ahmad Khan, directly and through the *Aligarh Observer*."[5] He sent a copy of the Congress Report to Beck, who in reply reiteratea Sir Syed's arguments, and acknowledged that his opinions were "imbibed from his Chief Sir Syed Ahmad and his intimate association with him".[6] Beck's categorical statement should set at rest the oft-repeated insinuations that Beck was Sir Syed's political oracle. Beck came out with a fantastic observation about the alleged agitational methods of the Congress, which "will sooner or later, cause a mutiny among the inhabitants of these provinces and the Punjab. If this be joined with a Frontier War, it will be

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
5. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 207. Obviously *Aligarh Observer* is in correct and *Aligarh Institute Gazette* is implied here.
6. Theodore Beck to Badruddin Taybji, 7 May 1888, cited in *Ibid* pp. 207-208.

a disastrous affair. In the first place, the whole Mahomedan community of upper India is distressingly poor. If they are led to believe as they are already inclined to do that this is due to the British Government, they will be ready to rise." Conjuring up the bogey of Jihad and Wahhabi fanaticism he concluded that the 'excitable' and bellicose nature of the Muslims was not compatible with agitational politics. He observed:

> "If they (the Wahabis) follow the method of the Bengali press, and drink in the Bengali ideas, their tendency to revolt will be intensified, and being men of the sword they will not stop at talk.[1]

Strangely enough, Beck still entertained the spectre of a Wahhabi revolt, despite Sir Syed's exertions to dispel the misconceptions raised by Hunter. Neither did Beck like the Hindu less, nor did he love the Muslim more, his only love was the Indian Empire which he endeavoured to preserve against all dangers whether from Hindu Congress or from Wahhabi Muslims. Beck's reply put to an end Badruddin Tyabji's faint hope of an indirect approach to Sir Syed.

Badruddin Tyabji's role in the Congress endangered his position as a leader of the Anjuman-i-Islam, Bombay. Now the bastion of his power was threatened by anti-Congress faction of the Anjuman, who reversed their resolution of 27 July 1888 to send representatives to the Congress session at Allahabad. This amounted to nullification of his work as Congress president.[2] Hussain B. Tyabji would have us believe[3] that Khan Bahadur Ghulam Muhammad Munshi,[4] and Muhammad Hussain Hakeem[5] who had earlier supported his move to send delegates to the Congress, now made a somersault in their political affiliations. On 2 August 1888, they called a secret meeting of their own *Anjuman-i-Ahbab*[6] under the presidentship of the Qazi of Bombay, who issued a fatwa that it was not desirable for Muslims to join the Congress. Presumably to gain public support for their secret decisions, a meeting was held two days later, under the presidentship of H. H. Agha Akbar Shah, and was attended by 200 Muslim gentlemen. Ghulam Muhammad Munshi observed that "the Congress was originated by the Baboos."[7] This remark had the familiar

1. *Ibid.*, 208.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
3. For a fuller account see pp. 213-16 and pp. 230-33, *Ibid.*
4. He was a pioneer of Muslim education in Bombay and a founder member of the Anjuman-i-Islam, Bombay. Ghulam Muhammad Munshi in his *Autobiography*, gives a fuller account of his services to the cause of Muslim education. See *Autobiography* (Tract) IOL.
5. He was a barrister, *Bombay Gazette*, 6 August 1888, IOL.
6. Hakeem was its vice-president, and Munshi was its secretary, Husain B. Tyabji. *op. cit.*, p. 231.
7. *Bombay Gazette*, 6 August 1880.

ring of Sir Syed. For overwhelmingly illiterate Muslims participation in the Congress would be "a leap in the dark",[1] commented Husain Hakeem. As the Congress would accentuate disunity in the subcontinent, the Russians would be tempted to invade India, and as a result mosques and temples would be demolished.[2] Ghulam Ali Akhoond, showed better understanding of affairs, and observed that a united organization of the Indians as in the Congress would deter a Russian invasion rather than invite it.[3] He held up the Congress a loyal body patronized by the Government as was evident from the garden party given by the Governor of Madras to the Congress delegates last year. Maulvi Rafi-ud-Din countered that the real question was not that the Government was favourably disposed towards the Congress; but, were the Muslims fit in their present state of backwardness to join the Congress. In the end, the motion was put to vote and it was decided that Muslims should abstain from the Congress. Only two persons voted against out of 200 who attended the meeting.[4] Clearly the meeting of the Anjuman-i-Ahbab was not a stage-managed show, and the pro-Congress point of view received due consideration.

Now the stage was set for a showdown with Badruddin Tyabji. On the pretext of "associating the general public of the Mussalmans" with the Congress, Ghulam Muhammad Munshi and Muhammad Hussain Hakeem succeeded in persuading the Anjuman to throw open its meeting on 5 August 1888 to all the Muslims. In this manner they managed to pack the hall with "a large crowd of disorderly and ignorant rabble."[5] This meeting was presided over by Qamar-ud-Din Tyabji,[6] and was addressed by Badruddin Tyabji who claimed that many men of wealth and education had joined the Congress. Neither the Congress was 'animated by a feeling of disloyalty,' nor was it a 'child of the Baboos.' Dismissing Sir Syed's opposition, he urged the audience to accept or reject the Congress on its own merits, and not to follow the lead of individuals, however, eminent. He tried to allay the fears that Muslim minority "would be swamped by the

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.* He was a Persian teacher of Elphinstone School, Bombay.

4. *Ibid.* Hussain Tayabji's account reconstructed many years later, is likely to be less objective. In this case more credence should be given to the detailed contemporary version published in the *Bombay Gazette*. Of course the Anglo-Indian slant of the *Bombay Gazette* has to be discounted. At the same time, it would not reasonable to dismiss the opposition of men like Ghulam Muhammad Munshi as factional or personal as Hussain Tyabji suggests.

5. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

6. *Bombay Gazette*, 6 August 1888, Qamar-ud-Din (spelt by the paper as Cumurddin) was a brother of Badruddin.

majority" and invoked his pet draft rule on the subject. He assured his audience:

> No body wanted to intimidate the Government, no body wanted to drive out the English.[1]

This rejoinder was directed against Muhammad Husain Hakeem, without naming him. The Qazi of Bombay refuted Tyabji's arguments and maintained that, 'The generality of Mahomedans do not like this movement.'[2] Muhammad Husain Hakeem asked what would Muslims gain by joining the Congress, and then made a personal sally at Badruddin Tyabji:

> If Mr. Budroodeen, who told them to join the Congress was a man well known for his learning and ability, was Sir Syed Ahmed, who warned them against it, in any way inferior to him? Were Mr. Ameer Ali or the Nawab Abdul Latif who agreed with the Syed, men of less distinction than Budroodeen?[3]

After this a heated controversy flared up in the hall. In the end, Badruddin advised the Muslims to join the Congress in their own interest, "and not allow the Hindoos alone to speak in the name of the country".[4] Though Badruddin Tyabji's argument was cogent, and lent itself to an interpretation quite different from the Congress credo and Sir Syed's view point, it was lost on the audience. In the voting that followed an overwhelming majority decided against joining the Congress.[5] This "created consternation among the supporters of the Congress". 'Raza Husain, President of the Rafah-i-'Aam Association, "condemned the action of those Mahomedans who had brought about this result."[6] *The Poineer Mail* commented that "the revolt of the Bombay Muslims was not altogether spontaneous. Sir Syed Ahmad, is credited with having been at pains to put a spoke in the wheel of the Congress party even as far south as Bombay".[7] But there is no evidence to substantiate this view that Sir Syed was involved in any manner in the disruption of this meeting.

Badruddin Tyabji had to work hard to retrieve his own position in the Anjuman-i-Islam and to rehabilitate the pro-Congress elements in the

1. *Bombay Gazette*, 7 August 1888, *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. 6 August 1888, *Ibid.*
5. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 231. This decision was taken after a prolonged debate of four hours, and the proceedings of the meeting do not confirm Hussain, B. Tyabji's allegations that the Congress opponents achieved their success through the application of gerrymendering tactics.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32.
7. *The Pioneer Mail*, 19 August 1888.

Anjuman. On 15 August 1888, he presided over a meeting[1] of the Anjuman and succeeded in obtaining a confirmation of the 27 July 1888. But it was not without opposition. Husain Hakeem expressed his dissent and said that he was not bound by the new decision.[2] Hume indulged in lavish praise of Badruddin Tyabji for the "*masterly* manner" in which the meeting was managed, and eulogized, "When you come forward, you just do the thing, with a tact, wisdom and certainty, that no living man can better."[3] No compliment it was blatant blarney. Tyabji felt that Hume's show of exuberance was "uncalled for and therefore disowned any credit for himself".[4] Hume felt a trifle hurt by Tyabji's cold disavowal, but peristed in cojoling him that no Indian except Bonnerjee "would have so wisely guided the issue".[5] But it seems that, Badruddin Tyabji had begun to entertain second thoughts about the desirability of Muslim participation in the Congress. After discussing this problem with eminent Congress leaders like Pherozeshah Mehta, and Telang he suggested that "it would be wise to slacken political agitation for a while and let the passions subside."[6] Telang agreed that Badruddin Tyabji might not attend the Allahabad session, for which he had committed. himself in Madras.[7] But when Hume came to know of these deliberations, he urged Badruddin Tyabji to live up to his word. Hume again garnished his argument with flattery, "your having been President last year, and having so skilfully manipulated the 'rebellion' in Bombay, marks you in the eyes of the country the most important man there."[8]

In reply to Hume, Badruddin Tyabji wrote a memorable letter, which reflected the transition in his views.

> I write [as] an ardent friend of the Congress, desiring nothing so much as its success. You have been watching the movements of the Mahomedans, but still probably are not so well acquainted with their feelings as I am. Again, I have been discussing the matter with thoughtful members of the different communities who are all in favour of the Congress. What I write, therefore, may be taken to represent the views not only of myself, but such men as Mehta, Telang, etc. We

1. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Hume to Badruddin Tyabji, 4 September 1888, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 214.
5. Hume to Badruddin Tyabji, 13 September 1888, cited in *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Hume to Badruddin Tyabji, 20 October 1888, cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 223-24.

> are all of opinion, that having regard to the distinctly hostile attitude of the Mahomedans which is daily becoming more pronounced and more apparent, that it is time for the friends, promoters and supporters of the Congress, to reconsider their position, and to see whether under the present circumstances, it is, or is it not, wise for us to continue holding the Congress meetings every year.[1]

Since "friction and bitterness which are caused by this agitation every year outweigh the advantages gained," he proposed that the Congress should be prorogued for five years which would give us an opportunity of reconsidering the whole position and if necessary, of retiring with dignity,"[2] ... If after five years, the situation improved the Congress could be revived, otherwise "we can drop [it] with dignity."[3] If the choice was between communal accord and the application of representative institutions he would have preferred to foster political progress in an atmosphere of harmony than of communal conflict. The Congress should give priority to communal harmony over political agitation. But this 'truly statesmanlike and wise"[4] counsel was not heeded by Hume whose zeal was greater than his discretion. Now Hume impressed upon Badruddin Tyabji the weakness of the anti-Congress movement,[5] but the latter was not convinced. Though eager to attend the Congress session at Allahabad, Badruddin Tyabji was not sure whether he still commanded support of the Anjuman to 'represent the Anjuman as well as the Mussalmans.'[6] Now his position in the Anjuman had been considerably weakened as his influential brother Qamaruddin Tyabji was 'on his death bed', Muhammad Ali Roghi, president of the Anjuman was almost mentally deranged, and Jairajbhai Pirbhai, a wealthy supporter had died.[7]

After two chaotic and rowdy sessions of the Anjuman on 5 December 1888, "a decision was ultimately forced", and four delegates were elected with a narrow majority of two votes. Now it was a straight fight between the pro-Congress and anti-Congress factions and the lessons of this "equivocal, doubtful and ineffective"[8] triumph were not lost on Tyabji. This decision brought to climax to his inner conflict. His mind was made up.

1. Badruddin Tyabji to Hume, 30 October 1888, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 224.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
4. *Ibid.*,
5. A. O. Hume to Badruddin Tyabji, 5 November 1888, cited in *Ibid.* pp. 225-226.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 226-27.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
8. *Ibid.*

He would be the last man to deceive himself. Despite bright prospects of 'personal glory and ambition', and urgent exhortations of old friends like Hume, he decided that it was "neither chivalrous nor wise to presume to represent the Mussalmans"[1] under such doubtful circumstances. This was the dictate of his conscience. Undoubtedly he was a man of the highest integrity. He could not be cajoled by Hume or browbeaten by Sir Syed. His decision to fade out from the Congress was in harmony with his sincere and sensitive nature. To interpret his decision of abstaining from active Congress politics, as a confession of defeat, would be unrealistic and uncharitable. To have chosen the most beneficial course of action for his own people reflected his wisdom, self-lessness and sense of realism. Muslim welfare mattered the most and came first in this fateful decision. Though he stayed away from the Allahabad session, and thereafter preferred to forego the responsibilities of Congress leadership, he still remained a Congressman in his personal convictions. After 1888, he shifted the focus of his attention from politics to education, which he now considered all the more vital as a prerequisite for Muslim political progress. He defined his new task:

> The nation is like an army marching in divisions. None must lag behind. His task was to bring the Mahomedans up in line.[2]

Badruddin Tyabji's decision to abdicate Congress leadership, at the height of his career, had greater significance in the larger context of Muslim politics as it amounted to the recognition of Muslim consensus against the Congress. This marked the triumph of the anti-Congress movement. Hitherto an obscure episode of Muslim politics, it must be acknowledged that Badruddin Tyabji's exit from the Congress widened the credibility gap between the Congress and the Muslims, and thus paved the way for the success of the anti-Congress movement. His fadeout left the Congress poor, but poorer still were the Congress Muslims who found themselves leaderless in the midst of their struggle against Sir Syed, and Syed Ameer Ali.

**Sir Syed Ahmad Khan
and the Anti-Congress Movement**

Sir Syed's opposition to the Congress was a landmark in Muslim politics of later 19th century. Historians differ about the time when he declared his public opposition to the Congress. Hali states that he did

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibit.*, p. 228.

not take "any precipitate action in the public opposition to the Congress"[1] but waited for two years in order to examine the nature of Congress resolutions and demands. It was not till 1887 that he became convinced that the Congress demands like the holding of simultaneous examinations and the election to the Legislative Councils even if unobjectionable for the Government, were detrimental to the Muslims who were educationally backward.[2] Hali's explanation is untenable. How could Sir Syed have taken two years to decide the merits of simultaneous examinations, after having been associated with the Civil Service Agitation till 1884. That he should have waited so long before rejecting the elective principle which he had repudiated so forcefully in 1883 is unbelievable. Ameen Zubairi[3] concurs with Hali, and even Husain B. Tyabji states that till the end of 1887, Sir Syed "had not yet opened his mouth against the Congress".[4] It would imply that Sir Syed had remained quiescent for two years and then suddenly erupted into an anti-Congress outburst in his address to the Muhammadan Educational Conference in December 1887.

Taking a slightly different view, Tufail Manglori holds that despite the furore of the Anglo-Indian press, Sir Syed remained quiescent till the establishment of Muhammadan Educational Conference.[5] Ram Gopal toes the same line, that "Aligarh's neutrality was changed to active opposition to the Congress with the birth of the Muhammadan Educational Conference."[6] Such an interpretation tends to dramatize history and does little justice to Sir Syed's well-considered political ideas. In fact, Sir Syed had begun to oppose the Congress long before the establishment of the Muhammadan Educational Conference. Nevertheless, to dissuade Muslims from politics, as a matter of policy, was nothing short of political activity. Since Sir Syed proclaimed Muslim opposition to the Congress from the platform of the Muhammadan Educational Conference, it cannot be denied that he used it as a cover for the propagation of his political ideas.

As a matter of principle, Sir Syed was opposed to the Congress aims and methods. At first, he gave expression to his *personal opposition*[7] in an article in November 1886, which was later elaborated by him into a declaration of *public opposition*[8] in December 1887. This distinction

1. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 312.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
3. Maulvi Muhammad Ameen Zubairi, *Tazkira-i-Sir Syed*, Lahore, n.d., p. 172.
4. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
5. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
6. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
7 & 8. Emphasis added.

between his personal and public opposition is only a matter of form and not substance, and only reflects the progressive growth of Sir Syed's anti-Congress attitude. Since in 1885 he was not invited to the first session of the Congress it would have been both premature and improper for him to have declared his opposition. He waited for the publication of the resolutions and reports of the first Congress. When invited to the second session of the Congress, he came out with his objections to the Congress in an article published in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* of 23 November 1886. As an enunciation of his personal creed this little known article was the prelude of his memorable public pronouncement at Lucknow. Referring to the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on the basis of elective principle he asked :

> How will the mixture of nationalities affect the working of (Indian) Parliament ?[1]

Now he "deliberately used the term 'Nationalities' to denote the different communities residing in India".[2] His argument was fuller in scope:

> If at any future time there should be a Parliament with Hindus and Mohammedans sitting on two sides of the house, it is probable that the animosity which would ensue far exceeds anything that can be witnessed in England. For the safeguard of the English system is.. .that the party in power is always in dread of being in a minority by defection of some of its adherents, but this safeguard would not exist in India because Hindus would not turn Mohammedan and *vice versa*. Moreover, the Mohammedans would be in a permanent minority and their case would resemble that of the unfortunate Irish members in the English Parliament, who have always been outvoted by the Englishmen. The majority in Parliament has absolute control and a study of the habit of assemblies point to the conclusion that bodies of men are less generous in regarding opponents than individual rulers are. If this were so, and one side were perpetually outvoted there is only too much fear that the minority would ultimately take the matter in their own hands, and see if they can gain by force what they were unable to obtain by constitutional means.[3]

This article was an exposē of the Muslim constitutional position.

Perhaps Sir Syed was content with the publication of this article and there is little evidence to show that after this, he took any steps to organize any anti-Congress opposition, except that in a meeting of Muslims of Lahore, in early 1887, he bemoaned the publication of seditious pamphlets

1. Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature (1818-1917)*, Calcutta, 1965, p. 233.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

like *The Star of the East.*[1] This meeting was attended by Hali as well. Later, Sir Syed emphasized that Muslims who were still considered suspect by the authorities should not join the seditious crowd of the Congress.[2] It seems that by early 1887, he had begun to appreciate the necessity of a public warning to Muslims against the Congress, and his Lucknow speech came in response to this challenge. Syed Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif had also rejected the Congress, and similarly the Muslim press from Lahore to Calcutta had forged an anti-Congress consensus. *Rafiq-i-Hind* asserted that Muslims could not continue to participate in the Congress agitation as their interests differed from those of Hindus.[3] *The Anjuman-i-Punjab* attributed Muslim abstention from the Congress to the attacks of the Hindu press on Muslims.[4] Later, *Rafiq-i-Hind* contended that India was not one nation, and Muslims who formed a large part of its population had held aloof from the Congress.[5] *Azad* was gratified that Muslims did not join the Congress and did not show any signs of disloyality.[6] *Rafiq-i-Hind* reflected the anti-Congress feelings of Muslims of the Punjab :

> The Bengalis are evidently labouring under the impression that the Mahommedans are ignorant of their own interests; but the Bengalis are sadly mistaken. It is a pity they have waxed eloquent in vain; and their efforts to induce the Mahommedans of this Province have, unfortunately for them, failed entirely, and not a single Mahommedan has considered it fit to join the Congress. The most interesting feature is that the Mahommedans of the very Province where the so-called National Congress met, have deliberately declined to participate in it.[7]

The Muslim Herald of Madras, questioned the application of the word "national" to the Congress, since this term could be only applicable to a people "descended from one stock, speaking a common tongue, amenable to a uniform law, and united under one Government".[8] The only thing common between the Hindus and Muslims was their common allegiance to the British, otherwise, "In all other respects, they are widely sundered

1. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 312.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
3. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 25 December 1885, cited in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 6 January 1886, IOL.
4. *The Anjuman-i-Punjab*, 25 December 1886, cited in *NWPNR*, 1887, IOL.
5. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 8 January 1887, cited in *Ibid.*
6. *Azad*, Lucknow, 14 January 1887, cited in *Ibid.*
7. Muharram Ali Chishti to the Editor, *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 21 January 1887, IOL.
8. *The Muslim Herald*, Madras, 20 October 1887, cited in *The Voice of India*, December 1887, IOL.

in race, religion, social forms and customs." The Congress claims of unity were hollow as it was mainly an organization of high caste Brahamins who are defiled by the shadow of a low caste person.[1] *The Mahomedan Observer* of Calcutta dispelled the fears that abstention from the Congress would undermine Muslim political interests.[2] Thus an anti-Congress consensus preceded Sir Syed's Lucknow speech, and viewed against this background his historic oration was more of an emphatic restatement of political fact and not an exposition of any new political policy. Though not the starting point of anti-Congress movement, his speech deserves notice for its wider impact.

Speaking before an audience of about 700 including delegates of the Muhammadan Educational Conference and the notables of Lucknow, on 28 December 1887, Sir Syed defined the attitude, "Muhammadan community ought to assume towards the Government, the political questions of the day, and the Bengali movement."[3] Later, on 16 March 1888, he elaborated these very views in his speech, at Meerut.[4] These speeches embody Sir Syed's anti-Congress polemics and conditioned Aligarh political thinking. He had little to add subsequently to the views outlined in these speeches. But like all great political pronouncements, "a fringe of ideas, principles, sentiments has become connected with it, and often obscures its real meaning and importance."[5] Undoubtedly these speeches created a stir in the country, but their "result belongs not to the present but to the future,"[6] wrote a contemporary paper. He opposed the Congress, not that he was less of a patriot, but was more of a Muslim. These speeches were imbued with the same spirit which had pervaded his speech on Local Self-Government, and his article of 23 November 1886. Since he had never subscribed to the Congress perception of Indian Nationalism, the question of his alleged volte-face from the national to the communal position would be unrealistic and irrelevant. Shorn of rhetorical overtones and bereft of fire and brimstone these speeches set forth the following argument :

Since the Congress did not represent Muslims of any part of India it could not claim to be a truly national body. Speaking for Muslims of the N. W. Province he controverted the "false impression that the Mussalmans have joined" the Congress, and condemned it as "a most unwarrantable interference in our nation."[7] Similarly the Madras Congress did not represent local Muslims, and Muslims of Lower Bengal who constituted

1. *Ibid.*
2. *The Mahomedan Observer*, 5 November 1887, cited in *Ibid.*
3. Munshi Siraj-ud-Din Ahmad, *Majmu'a*, p. 240.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
5. *The Pioneer Mail*, Allahabad, 18 January 1888, IOL.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Munshi Siraj-ud-Din Ahmad, *Majmu'a*, p. 255.

more than half the population of Bengal did not know what did the National Congress stand for?[1] He spoke for the Muslim nation as a whole.

He reiterated his belief that the British rule was indispensable for the maintenance of peace and security between the major communities of India. In the event of British withdrawal, India would be torn by a bloody struggle for power between Hindus and Muslims,[2] and it would be likely that both of them would fall victims to aggression of Russia, Germany or France. If India was not subjugated by European Powers, then Hindus would endeavour to establish their supremacy over Muslims, and perpetuate strife in this subcontinent. If freedom was to mean the substitution of British masters for Hindu overlords, then Muslims would prefer the Christian domination of the British to Hindu hegemony.[3] Loyalty to the British Crown was a guarantee of an honourable existence for Muslims, and was a prerequisite for their progress both educational and political. Any activity prejudicial to loyalty was an a nathema for Muslims.

India was a vast country inhabited by different communities separated from each other by religion, history and culture who did not share common political goals and suffered from disparities in their respective levels of material and educational development.[4] The absence of a common nationhood ruled out joint struggle for a common political destiny. It was impracticable therefore, to apply the elective principles to a system of Government affecting the interests of divergent communities. The restructuring of Viceroy's Legislative Council on these lines would be fraught with serious dangers for the Muslim nation. If the elections were to be held on the basis of adult franchise, Muslims would be reduced to a permanent minority which would be powerless against a majority four times their strength.[5] The term majority and minority could not be applied to Hindus and Muslims in the English constitutional sense of these terms,[6] for Hindus and Muslims were not organized as political parties but were religious groups having distinct national identities. Consequently, there could be no sharing of power between the majority and the minority as in the English political system. In India, majority rule meant irremovable Hindu domination. Even if the elections were held on the basis of limited franchise Muslims would mostly fail to meet the property and educational qualifications prescribed for voters.[7]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 258-59.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 247-48.

Even if an equal number of seats could be fixed both for Hindus and Muslims, not many capable Muslim representatives would be elected to defend the rights of their co-religionists in the Councils.[1] So the extension of elective principle was neither expedient nor beneficial for Muslims. No doubt Sir Syed's misgivings about the subjection of Muslim minority to Hindu majority were genuine and well-founded, but his opposition to democratization under any constitutional arrangement was unwarranted. Here he had drawn a wrong conclusion from right premises.

He asserted that the system of competitive examinations for recruitment to government service was not applicable to a country "where all the people from the highest to the lowest do not belong to one nation".[2] Since Muslims had not progressed in higher education they did not stand a fair chance in competitive examinations[3] against Bengali Hindus who being the most advanced would naturally usurp the rights of backward communities like Muslims. Muslim rights could be best protected through a system of nominations exercised by the Government. In this, he epitomised the general thinking of the Muslim nation, although he reminded them of the vital necessity of equipping themselves with higher education.

The Congress aims were positively detrimental to Hindu-Muslim amity and cooperation, as some Hindus entertained anti-Muslim designs, and imagined that by joining the Congress, "they would enhance Hindu power which would enable them to suppress those Muslim rites which were opposed to their own".[4] This apprehension must be viewed in the context of orthodox Hindu elements who were endeavouring to achieve the aims of the Anti-Cow-Slaughter movement through the Congress. Hindu-Muslim accord in matter of those religious rites which were deemed to be offensive by either community could only be possible through mutual friendship and unity, instead of hatred and hostility. Sir Syed had rightly foreseen the dangers of ultra Hindu domination of the Congress.

Denouncing the Congress agitation, he attributed it to the discontented Bengali Hindus, and pointed out that "the Bengali agitation is not the agitation of whole of India".[5] The Government was not frightened of Bengali paper agitation, but if the disaffection spread amongst the fiery Mussalmans, and Sikhs of the Punjab, and the warlike Rajputs of Northern India,[6] it would assume alarming proportions, that would justify

1. *Ibid.*, p. 248.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
6. *The Pioneer Mail*, 18 January 1888, IOL.

their suppression by bayonets. He admonished the Muslims against the repetition of the tragedy of 1857, and warned them against the hazards of political agitation likely to deflect them from the task of educational reconstruction. They should abstain from "the noise and tumult of politics" and ponder over their present backwardness in knowledge, higher education, and deficiency in wealth.[1] In education lay the only remedy for Muslim advancement. How far was it expedient to interdict political activity is a separate issue.

Sir Syed later wrote an article in order to mitigate the hostility generated by his speech, and frankly admitted that the Bengalis and upcountry Hindus had been angry with him for his Lucknow speech. Dispelling the misconception that he no longer favoured "the maintenance of friendship between Hindu and Muhammadan communities as was before," he affirmed :

> He is second to none in desiring that the two communities should always be on most friendly terms with each other.[2]

Religious prejudices should not "affect their friendship," and he had "repeatedly advised his co-religionists to refrain from killing kine in deference to the feelings of the Hindus". He could not be a party to the Congress, and "when Hindus or Bengalis adopted measures injurious to Musalmans, it was his duty to oppose them."[3] No other class except Bengalis and Maharatta Brahmins would benefit from the Congress resolutions. Since the Congress was generating communal strife, it was "nothing less than a civil war without the use of arms.[4]" He would have preferred an open armed conflict to this subtle war. In case, the internal administration of the country was transferred to the Indians, there would be a fair fight between the Hindus and Muslims, not with pen but with sword. If the Bengalis ever emerged victorious, "he would be the first to lick the dust of their feet",[5] but otherwise he would never let them trample upon his co-religionists. Sir Syed foresaw a Hindu-Muslim armed clash as an inevitable consequence of Congress policies. This article reinforced his Lucknow speech which still remained the focus of discussion all over India.

The Lucknow speech evoked marked political polarization and stirred

1. Munshi Siraj-ud-Din Ahmad, *Majmu'a*, p. 266.
2. *AIG*, 4 February 1888, cited in *NWPNR*, 1888, IOL.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

extremes of emotionalism. Soon after, euphoric praises and damning denunciations filled the press. *The Pioneer Mail* extolled this speech as a "remarkable political manifesto".[1] In a subsequent issue, it was emphasized that his speech had "created a sensation in the native community of Upper India".[2] Thousands of copies of the speech were published in Urdu and English and distributed in the form of pamphlets.[3] The Congress condemned his speech sharply, but Muslims in general responded to it heartily. It generated many controversies which in a way have not ceased.

The Lucknow speech, and the Meerut speech also, was an amalgam of the sublime and the absurd. The sophistry of some of his arguments[4] is not difficult to expose as also the contradictions in this extempore oration. Making a departure from his staid style, he held up his adversaries to derision and ridicule as is often displayed by common political demagogues. As a fervent debater it was not unnatural that he made certain statements which appear to be emotional and undignified, but in reality they were nothing more than rhetorical effusions in a heated controversy.[5] But his Congress opponents could not be expected to spare him for this. Raja Ram Pal Singh commented that Sir Syed's speech was "open to very serious objections"[6] for sheer inconsistency, as on the one hand he had deplored the ignorance of the landlords, and on the other hand did not consider even B.A.'s and M. A.'s fit enough to sit in the Council. That men of low castes would find their way to higher services through simultaneous examinations was highly anomalous, when he conceded that men of humble origin from England come out as civil servants to rule India.[7] This criticism was well-justified. But most of the Hindu press unleashed a campaign of vilification and character assassination. *Subodh Sindhu* dismissed Sir Syed's sentiments as 'puerile', and caustically pointed out, that Muslims had lost old bravery otherwise the Mughal Empire would not have fallen.[8] *Nayyar-i-Azam* upbraided Sir Syed who had preached against communal prejudices in *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* when he needed Hindu help for M.A.O. College, but now he was kindling fires of hatred and

1. *The Pioneer Mail*, 11 January 1888, IOL.
2. 22 February 1888, *Ibid.*, IOL.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Muhammad Sarwar, *Mazamin-i-Muhammad Ali*, Delhi, 1938, 1st ed., p. 287.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 288.
6. *Hindustan*, Kalakankar, 17 January 1888, cited in *NWPNR*, 1888, IOL.
7. *Ibid.*, 18, 20, 21, and 22 January 1888,
8. *Subodh Sindhu*, Khandwa, 18 February 1888, cited in *NWPNR*, 1888.

prejudice against Hindus.[1] *Hindu Partap* exploded the myth of Muslim martial qualities and asked, where was the Muslim sword when Sivaji founded the Maharatta Kingdom, and where was the Muslim sword when English soldiers "wrested province after province from the Emperors of Delhi ?"[2] *Oudh Punch*[3] scoffed at Sir Syed's idea that men of low birth should not be appointed to the Councils, and carried many a satire[4] and cartoon[5] ridiculing his politics. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*[6] maligned him for having introduced a bill which tended to tamper with the Muslim law of succession, and accused his son Syed Mahmud for having advocated the adoption of English as the official language instead of Urdu. Playing up the charges of heterodoxy against Sir Syed, it slandered him for having demolished a mosque in Benares.[7] Pundit Ajudhia Nath delivered a speech at Lucknow "in which he proved from the *Koran* that the National Congress was good for India, and denounced all Mahommedans who opposed the Congress as followers of Yazid."[8] No Muslim however wicked, would stand such an odious comparison much less the noble Sir Syed. These attacks touched the finest points of Muslim sensibility in order to alienate Muslim sympathy from Sir Syed. All the pro-Congress elements joined in a smear campaign in order to denigrate Sir Syed as an enemy of Islam and instrument of British imperialism and an adversary of India.

In contrast, Muslim press and associations upheld Sir Syed's verdict on the Congress. *The Muslim Herald* described the Congress as a body of 'mushroom patriots', and advised Muslims to maintain "strict neutrality" towards the Congress until its objects were defined. In fact, Congress sought to enlist Muslim prowess in order to "hector the Government into complying with their demands, however extreme".[9] Muslims unanimously endorsed Sir Syed's verdict on the Congress despite their differences with

1. *Nayyar-i-Azam*, Moradabad, 23 and 30 July 1888, cited in *NWPNR, 1888*.
2. *Hindu Partap*, March 1888, cited in *Ibid*.
3. *Oudh Punch*, 5 April 1888, cited in *Ibid*. (It was edited by Munshi Sajjad Husain, a famous Urdu satirist.)
4. 31 May 1888. *Ibid*.
5. 21 June 1888. *Ibid*.
6. Cited by *Nasim-i-Agra*, 7 June 1888, cited in *NWPNR, 1888*.
7. The alleged mosque was an unauthorised platform which was demolished by the Benares Municipality for the construction of a hospital. Sir Syed as a member had no means to stop the Municipality from taking this decision. For details see *AIG*, 26 May 1876, IOL.
8. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 19 May 1888, IOL. (Yazid was a dissolute Ummayed Caliph, who was responsible for the massacre of Karbela in which Imam Husain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet fell a martyr. Yazid is an object of universal censure among Muslims).
9. *The Muslim Herald*, Madras, cited in the *Pioneer Mail*, 11 January 1888, IOL.

him on religious matters.[1] *Akhbar-i-'Alam* concurred with Sir Syed that the Congress was harmful both for Muslims and Hindus.[2] *Punjabi Akhbar* hoped that Muslims would never tolerate Bengali hegemony, and censured those who attacked Sir Syed.[3] *Azad* challenged the representative character of some of the Congress Muslims.[4] A certain Abu Darjat Ghulam Gilani of Jhelum wrote a series of articles which reflected Sir Syed's polemics. He argued, that the supporters of the Congress instead of proving its usefulness for Muslims, were heaping abuses on Sir Syed's head for having raised the red flag to warn his co-religionists against the hazards of the Congress.[5] Surely, the anti-Congress movement commanded the backing of Muslim masses who in some places applied social boycott against the Congress Muslims and refused to sell to them.[6] They held meetings in order to express their identification with Sir Syed. Muslims of Allahabad pledged support to Sir Syed and opposed the Congress.[7] A similar decision was taken by Muslims of Saharanpur in a public meeting.[8] On 9 May 1888, the Congress meeting in Lahore was boycotted by the local Muslims and not a single Muslim attended.[9] Muslims of Lucknow in a meeting vindicated Sir Syed's stand and expressed their indignation against the remarks of Pundit Ajudhia Nath. This meeting was attended by twenty[10] to thirty thousand persons,[11] and Muslim shopkeepers closed their shops to join it.

> Certain it is that no such Mahomedan meeting on politics has ever been held in modern times in India.[12]

Muslims of Jaunpur condemned the Congress[13] in a meeting attended by one thousand persons. Muslims of Madras, in their meeting, decided against any participation in the Congress and praised Sir Syed's

1. *The Pioneer Mail*, 22 February 1888, IOL.
2. *Akhbar-i-'Alam*, 14 February 1888, cited in *NWPNR*, 1888.
3. *Punjabi Akhbar*, Lahore, 22 February 1888, cited in *Ibid.*
4. *Azad*, Lucknow, 17 February 1888, cited in *Ibid.*
5. *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, 4 June 1888, PUL.
6. *'Alam-i-Taswir*, Cawnpur, 25 May 1888, cited in *NWPNR*, 1888.
7. *AIG*, 3 March 1888, cited in *Ibid.*
8. *AIG*, 3 April 1888, cited in *Ibid.*
9. *AIG*, 26 May 1888, cited in *Ibid.*
10. Mahomed Shafi to the *Pioneer*, cited by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in *The Present State of Indian Politics*, Appendix, p. vi.
11. *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, 4 June 1888.
12. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 19 May 1888, IOL.
13. *'Alam-i-Taswir*, 27 July 1888, cited in *NWPNR*, 1888.

"opposition with reference to political matters".[1] The Anjuman-i-Islam, Bombay decided to boycott the Congress, and endorsed the stand taken by Nawab Abdul Latif, Sir Syed Ahmad, and Syed Ameer Ali.[2] The Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore, in its meeting on 19 November 1887, resolved that since it was "inadvisable for the Mahomedans to attend the Congress the Anjuman could not send any delegates".[3] Sir Syed's "remarkable speech" was read out in a public meeting of the Anjuman-i-Islamiya of Amritsar, and the Anjuman conveyed its appreciation to him. The Central National Mahomedan Association of Punjab, in its general meeting denounced the Congress and passed a vote of confidence in Sir Syed. The Anjuman Rifah-i-'Aam, Allahabad, condemned the Congress in a meeting comprising an audience of about three thousand.[4] Meetings were also held in Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana and other towns to denounce the Congress and to express their approval of the Lucknow speech.[5] The Muslim youth of Lahore pledged to follow the lead of Sir Syed. The Congress was rejected by Muslim associations through their "network, scattered throughout the length and breadth of India".[6] Muslim nation, now conscious of its own political identity, had refused to be submerged by the Hindu Congress.

Sir Syed and the United Indian Patriotic Association

Sir Syed's anti-Congress campaign reached its climax with the formation of the Indian Patriotic Association as it was originally called. In its essence this was an attempt to coalesce the anti-Congress elements both among Hindus and Muslims and to create a common front against the Congress.[7] Though still averse to political agitation, he was constrained to employ methods of political organization in order to counteract the Congress influence. He was not the first to take the initiative in the establishment of the Indian Patriotic Association since the Hindu aristocracy of N. W. Provinces under the leadership of Raja Udai Partap Singh was already busy in making efforts to organise a Hindu front against the

1. "Mahomed Shafi to the *Pioneer*," cited in *The Present State of Indian Politics*, Appendix, p. vi.
2. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 10 August 1888, IOL.
3. "Mahomed Shafi to the *Pioneer*," cited in *The Present State of Indian Politics*, Appendix, p. vii.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
6. *Ibid.*, p. vi.
7. *The Pioneer Mail*, 12 August 1888, IOL.

Congress. On 29 April 1888 at Lucknow, they held a meeting for this purpose, a working committee[1] was appointed to marshal Hindu opposition to the Congress, and to enlist Muslim support as well. Sir Syed could claim solid Muslim backing in his anti-Congress campaign, but in comparison Raja Udai Partap Singh, did not enjoy even partial support of his own community. It was for this reason, than for anything else, that Sir Syed was accepted as leader by the anti-Congress Hindus. This ad hoc cooperation between anti-Congress Hindus and Muslims, without any prior agreement on fundamental political issues implied that it was essentially an artificial and ephemeral arrangement. They were not united in common ideals but in a common antipathy. Without a positive programme it was doomed to failure.

On 8 August 1888, Sir Syed outlined the aims of the Association :

(*a*) To publish and circulate pamphlets and other papers for information of the members of Parliament, English journals, and the people of Great Britain, in which those mis-statements will be pointed out by which the supporters of the Indian National Congress have wrongfully attempted to convince that all nations of India and the Indian chiefs and rulers agree with the aims and objects of the National Congress.

(*b*) To inform members of Parliament and the newspapers of Great Britain and its people by the same means, of the opinions of Mahomedans in general, of the Islamic Anjumans, and of those Hindus and their societies which are opposed to the objects of the National Congress.

(*c*) To strive to preserve peace in India, and to strengthen the British rule, and to remove those feelings from the hearts of Indian people which the supporters of the Congress are stirring throughout the country, and by which great dissatisfaction is being raised among the people against British Government.[2]

By the end of September 1888, the Association had not only enlarged its sphere of activity to embrace elements from the smaller communities like the Sikhs, but also made a corresponding change in its name, by adding the pre-fix United[3]. Several princes and chiefs extended their patronage to

1. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 5 May 1888. The managing committee comprised Raja Udai Partap Singh of Darbhanga, Rai Pundit Siri Krishen, Honorary Magistrate, Munshi Nawal Kishore, Babu Shiv Parshad, Honorary Magistrate, and Rai Murli Manohar, Honorary Magistrate.

2. *The Pioneer Mail*, 2 September 1888, IOL.

3. *AIG*, 25 September 1888.

this Association, and a branch was set up in London[1] under Morrison.[2] There was nothing novel in this arrangement, for the Congress was already availing of the services of its numerous English supporters in India and England. Beck looked after its work in Aligarh.

Hindu leaders were assigned the task of popularising it among their co-religionists. Raja of Benares delivered a speech against the Congress at Benares Institute.[3] Raja Udai Partap Singh wrote a pamphlet in English repudiating the Congress thesis that democracy was suitable for India.[4] A public meeting of the Association at Jaunpur was presided over by the local Raja.[5] Maharaja Partab Narain presided over an anti-Congress meeting at Lucknow.[6] Uma Sankar Misra criticized the Congress in an article in *The Asiatic Review*.[7] Undoubtedly the Association had come to play an active role in a section of Hindu society and developed into "a rallying point for Hindu landlords and aristocrats"[8] of N. W. Province. Many Hindus joined Muslims in an anti-Congress meeting at Cawnpur.[9] *Akhbar-i-'Aam* suggested that the best way to suppress Congress agitation was to concede some of its demands in order to deprive it of public support and leave it penitent and forgotten.[10] It seems, that the anti-Congress movement was not entirely confined to the upper class Hindus, but in some places did enjoy confidence of Hindu middle class as well.

Sir Syed achieved greater success in mobilising Muslim opposition all over India. He observed that "many Muslim Associations had thoroughly discussed the Congress programme and through a consensus, *Ahl-i-Islam* (people of Islam), and Muslim Associations had concluded that Congress aims were detrimental to the Muslims who should abstain from it."[11] He issued a circular letter, to the Muslim Associations :

> "I am firmly of the opinion that the Congress would be harmful for the Muslims in their present condition and would continue to be so, no matter what degree of educational advancement is attained by them in

1. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 307.
2. Later he succeeded Beck as the Principal of M.A.O. College Aligarh.
3. *The Pioneer Mail*, 12 August 1888, IOL.
4. 26 September 1888, *Ibid.* The pamphlet entitled 'Democracy not Suited to India' was an echo of Sir Syed's argument.
5. *Oudh Akhbar*, 13 October 1888, cited in *NWPNR 1888*, IOL.
6. 30 November 1888, *Ibid.*
7. *The Pioneer Mail*, 7 November 1888, IOL.
8. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
9. *'Alam-i-Tasweer*, 20 December 1888, cited in *NWPNR*, 1888, IOL.
10. *Akhbar-i-'Aam*, Lahore, 1 January 1889, PUL.
11. Sir Syed to all the Muslim Associations of India, 21 August, cited by Mushtaq Husain, *Maktubat-i-Sir Syed*, Lahore, n.d., p. 207.

future. If the Congress aims are fulfilled, the Muslims in India would be reduced to the position of an accursed people like the Jews".[1]

He invited them to affiliate their Associations with the Indian Patriotic Association.[2] In response to his call, 51 Muslim Associations from all over the country offered to cooperate with the Indian Patriotic Association.[3] Syed Hassan Bilgrami expressed his agreement with Sir Syed.[4] Sir Asman Jah assured sympathy, and on behalf of the Nizam contributed Rs. 4,000 to the Association.[5] The anti-Congress movement spread from Aligarh to Peshawar. The Anjuman-i-Islamia, Lahore decided to enrol en bloc in the Indian Patriotic Association. Nawab Abdul Majid Khan addressed a meeting and warned the Muslims against 'the mischievous character'[6] of Congress propaganda being carried out by a certain Ali Muhammad Bhim ji in the Punjab. The Anjuman-i-Islamia, Amritsar decided to exclude any member who joined the Congress.[7] A large anti-Congress meeting was held in Peshawar, in which Jalal-ud-Din Khan asserted that the word national was "wrong and inapplicable to the Congress"[8] as India was not inhabited by one nation. Qazi Abdul Qadir the president of the meeting censured those Hindus who sought to create petty differences among people who had always lived together. The Muslims of Peshawar reacted strongly against Bhim ji who had described Sir Syed as a kafir, and denounced Bhim ji for trying to play off one section of the Muslims against the other.[9] On 5 October 1888, the United Indian Patriotic Association held a meeting in the Town Hall, Delhi, and Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, the famous Urdu novelist, addressed an audience of four thousand including five hundred Hindus.[10] Maulana Hali also attended this meeting. In the meantime, the Committee of the Central National Mahomedan Association of Calcutta under the leadership of Syed Ameer Ali assured Sir Syed of their "sympathy with the objects of the Patriotic Association.[11]

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. For their names see *The Pioneer Mail*, 26 September and 28 November, 1888, IOL.
4. 9 September 1888, *Ibid.*
5. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 15 September 1888. See also *The Pioneer Mail*, 9 September 1888, IOL.
6. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 30 August 1888, IOL. (Bhim ji toured Northern India on behalf of the Congress).
7. 17 September 1888, *Ibid.*
8. 11 October 1888, *Ibid.*
9. 30 August 1888, *Ibid.*
10. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 12 October 1888. See also Karamat Ullah, *Maulvi Nazir Ahmad Dehlvi Kay Lektchron Ka Majmu'a*, Lahore, 1890, pp. 1-6, IOL.
11. *The Pioneer Mail*, 26 September 1888, IOL.

Similarly, the Punjab National Mahomedan Association identified itself with Sir Syed, and Muharram Ali Chishti, in a public speech in Lahore, affirmed that Muslims as a nation were opposed to the Congress. They also disapproved of Bhim ji's Congress propaganda campaign in the Punjab.[1] It is significant, that the Central National Mahomedan Associations of Bengal and Punjab, despite their differences with Sir Syed on a political question of fundamental nature, gave their full support to him for maintaining an unbroken Muslim front against the Congress. Undoubtedly Sir Syed had been successful in evolving a country-wide concensus of anti-Congress elements, and this fact was acknowledged by a Hindu paper:

> He offered it not only the combined opposition of all the Islamite Associations of every shade of interest or opinion but all Islam. Nay, more he threatened it with a Confederacy of his brethren of the Faith with Hindu nobility and gentry of wealthy classes, throughout the country, and all the native Princes and Chiefs of all creeds in the Empire.[2]

Hardly four months had passed when the Hindu and Muslim components of the United Indian Patriotic Association began to fall apart. Loyalty was not in dispute, the real issue came to be, who was more loyal than the others. Under their mistaken belief, that Sir Syed had organised this Association as an exercise in loyalism, the Hindu members tried to outdo Sir Syed in their display of loyalty. But they misconstrued Sir Syed's political maturity, for he clearly distinguished between the show of loyalty and opposition to the Congress. He did not envisage the Association as an exhibition of competitive loyalty between persons or communities. He asked the Government to dispel the general impression that since Lord Dufferin and the Governor of Madras had shown hospitality to the Congress delegates[3] in 1886 and 1887, the Government was partial towards the Congress. As the pro-Congress press was consistently disseminating this impression among the people, it might not be without substance. The Government should be impartial and circumspect in its dealings with the Congress,[4] he argued. Unlike the Hindu members, he did not invoke the Government wrath on the Congress. A section of the Hindu press expounded that such a Congress in Russia would have been exiled to Siberia.[5] The ultra-Loyalist Hindu elements of the Asso-

1. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 16 November 1888.
2. *The Reis and Rayyat*, 29 December 1888, B.M. (Collindale).
3. *Akhbar-i-'Aam*, Lahore, 27 December 1887, cited in *NWPNR, 1887*, IOL. This refers to the garden parties given to the Congress delegates.
4. *AIG*, 11 September 1888, cited in *NWPNR, 1888*.
5. *Oudh Akhbar*, Lucknow, 28 June 1888, cited in *Ibid.*

ciation formulated these views into a definite demand in a meeting of the United Patriotic Association at Lucknow and brought forward two resolutions. By the first resolution, it was proposed to make the Patriotic Association a branch of the proposed Indian Loyal Association being set up under the chairmanship of the Raja of Benares.[1] Sir Syed welcomed the formation of a new anti-Congress body, but refused to commit the older body to a subservient role without a prior decision of its members. Sir Syed's objection caused disappointment to the faction led by Raja Shiva Parshad. The second resolution proposed :

> That a petition be presented to Government to add certain sections to the Criminal Code for the suppression of seditious writings and lecturing in the vernacular, . . .and that men like Bhim ji and others, who are travelling about and making seditious speeches and spreading seditious writings in vernacular, should be stopped by law, and that the Lucknow Committee take charge of the matter.[2]

Sensing the dangers of this retrograde proposal, Sir Syed refused to align himself with the reactionary elements. He could not be a party to any punitive legislation nullifying the freedom of expression for Indian people and the press on the whole. Even his obnoxious detractor Bhimji was no exception to this rule. He did not let his political opposition to degenerate into a vendetta. An example of fairness in political opposition had already been set by him by according permission to the Congress to hold their meeting in the Institute Hall, Aligarh. Even his most savage detractors acknowledged this with admiration.[3] Like Voltaire, he defended his opponent's right to freedom of expression. Sir Syed dissented vehemently from both of these resolutions :

> I told the people who showed them to me that I did not agree with them. I do not believe the Bengalis to be really disloyal to the Government, although they have adopted extremely bad methods as regards public affairs. I have no animosity against the Congress-Wallahs that I should undertake the work of trying to have them arrested by the criminal courts. Their opinions and ours are different. We believe that what they want is very harmful for Mahomedans, for Rajputs, for the other nations of Hindus, and especially for the peace of the country. For this reason we are opposed to them. If their proceedings are likely to raise disturbance in the country (and in my opinion there is without doubt great danger of this), then it is a matter for the Government itself to deal with. There is no need for us to petition Government about it.[4]

1. Sir Syed Ahmed to the Editor, *The Pioneer Mail*, 28 November 1888, IOL.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Hindustan*, Kalakankar, 25 September 1888, cited in *NWPNR, 1888*
4. Sir Syed Ahmed to the Editor, *The Pioneer Mail*, 28 November 1888.

He made it clear to the sponsors of these resolutions that "either I would not join the meeting, or if I joined I would strenuously oppose them."[1]

Sir Syed's opposition upset the designs of Raja Shiva Parshad and his faction who wanted to use the anti-Congress agitation as a ladder for personal ambition. Primarily interested in individual advancement, they were least concerned about the success of their political programme. But Sir Syed was not willing to compromise his political principles, and suffered their defection even though some of them had been his good friends. They broke away from the United Indian Patriotic Association,[2] and to justify their defection, Raja Shiva Parshad and Munshi Nawal Kishore issued statements to *The Pioneer* accusing Sir Syed of designs to impose his leadership on the anti-Congress movement for the sake of self aggrandisement. But *Hindustan*, a Hindu paper, saw through their guilty conscience and commented that "Raja Shiva Parshad's faction had let down Syed Sahib."[3] Muharram Ali Chishti, despite his recent showdown with Sir Syed, exonerated him of all blame and endorsed his stand.[4] Even Hume, who had no love lost for Sir Syed, conceded that of all the men in the anti-Congress front, except for Sir Syed, "there is not one, single one of them who *in any way* possessed respect or confidence of his fellow countrymen even before the Congress question."[5] Describing the Maharaja of Benares, Hume wrote that "intellectually he is an absolute cypher... absolutely unable to form any opinion for himself on any earthly subject", and dismissed Raja Shiva Parshad as an upstart who had "a keen eye to his own advancement". He ridiculed "the so called Raja of Bhinga. . . who has been pestering editors of papers. . .to write him up for a seat in the Council". Munshi Nawal Kishore's character was sketched in a question, "Did any natives believe in him, trust him, respect him ?" Hume's testimony corroborates the factum of truth, that except for Sir Syed, Hindu leaders of the Patriotic Association were petty men, opportunists and self-seekers. In his characteristic style, Hume commented, if Sir Syed's Hindu colleagues would have been as "insane on the subject of the Congress"[6] as he was, perhaps the United Indian Patriotic Association could have played the role of a constructive opposition to the Congress. This was the highest compliment to Sir Syed. But when Raja Shiva

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 15 December, 1888.
3. *Hindustan*, n.d., cited in *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Hume to Auckland Colvin, 13 October 1888, *The Pioneer Mail*, 7 November 1888, IOL.
6. *Ibid.*

Parshad found his ambitions foiled by high principled Sir Syed, he felt no compunction in shifting his loyalty to the Congress. The old Raja could no longer withstand "the shower of abuse"[1] poured on his head by his irate co-religionists. Now under pressure of Hindu social sanctions he was obliged to align himself with the political creed of the Hindu majority. Significantly, Hindu and Muslim societies began to exert pressure on those whom they considered as renegades to their respective national cause. In this manner, the inter-communal social incompatibility was accentuated, and began to condition political loyalties of individuals and groups. Consequently no Hindu dared to cooperate with the Muslims in any anti-Congress movement, and very few Muslims responded to the call of Congress nationalism. In fact, social polarization between Hindus and Muslims proceeded apace with the political process.

The failure of the United Indian Patriotic Association was writ in its very composition. Since the Hindu-Muslim compact in the Association was neither old nor firm, and since the Hindu leaders lacked selfless spirit, the dissolution of the Association was inevitable. With the defection of the Hindu element, the Association was neither United, nor Indian, and its title to be Patriotic barely created any stir. Though the Association was reduced to a state of disarray, Sir Syed still clung to the fiction of its name, and henceforth made the Patriotic Association into an instrument of Muslim rights, and utilized it for shaping Muslim opinion on the question of reform of the Indian Councils.[2] It would be unfair therefore to write off the Association as a total wreck. The Association continued its anti-Congress campaign, and did succeed in coalescing the Muslims into an anti-Congress phalanx. The unpopularity of the Association among the Hindus was matched by its success among the Muslims.

Considering it as their real foe, the Congress zeroed its propaganda batteries against it, and did not desist even from using questionable means to counteract its influence. The Congress was resolved to retrieve its credit with the Muslims at all costs and Sir Syed construed it as a challenge to Muslim national unity. Since Sir Syed symbolized the anti-Congress Muslim movement, he was subjected to a campaign of slander and vilification unprecedented in contemporary politics. The Congress broadside was fired by Hume who led the Congress offensive against Sir Syed. Hume tried to cash in on Sir Syed's controversial religious ideas which were again played up in the press to undermine his leadership. In the meantime, through some of its Muslim partisans the Congress obtained a

1. *Akhbar-i-'Aam*, Lahore, 19 January 1889, PUL.
2. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-11.

fatwa against the United Indian Patriotic Association. They placed distorted facts before Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi,[1] and made him believe that Sir Syed was forcing the people to join his organization, and those who refused were being subjected to violence, and that the organization was dominated by his *Natury*[2] followers. The *fatwa* prescribed :

> No contact should be kept with Syed Ahmad, even though he called the people in the name of national welfare. Maybe he is well-meaning. But the result of any cooperation with him is a lethal poison for Islam and the Muslims. He administers such a sweet poison that none can stand it. You may settle affairs with Hindus but should not join him.[3]

The Congress armoury was reinforced by many such decrees. Hume shot many a paper thunderbolt to blast Sir Syed, and now theorized that only the Anglo-Indian press had built up Sir Syed as leader of the orthodox Muslims, otherwise he had no following among the main body of Muslims of India. He wrote :

> Why no orthodox Mahomedan will allow that he is a Mahomedan at all. They may and will join in secular matters with Christians, Hindus, Parsees, and any other set of infidels who are not disrespectful to their religion, but they neither can nor will follow nor join him in any matter, because he is in their eyes a pervert. The fact is that his religious views as set forth in his commentary on the Bible & c...in their eyes involve Atheism, and hence the Fatwahs denouncing him and his opinions...The idea that Sir Syed Ahmed can be in any matter the leader of any appreciable fraction of the orthodox Mahomedans is a pure delusion, and a delusion confined almost exclusively to Europeans,....[4]

Hume circulated the Ludhiana *fatwa* and claimed, that "many of the Muhamedans are carrying copies of this all over the Punjab, and greatest moulvis are everywhere attesting and deigning with it."[5] He asserted that the Ludhiana maulvis had "the absolute command of 40,000 Mahomedans" and on the whole they enjoyed, "control over half a million Mussalmans."[6] He hoped that "the *fatwa* will be read in every mosque on a Friday and copies placed in the hands of every Musalman who can

1. He was a widely venerated scholar of Deoband.
2. A nickname given to Sir Syed for his controversial interpretation of Islam in terms of nature as understood by contemporary science.
3. Sayyid Muhammad Mian, *Ulema-i-Haq Aur Un Kay Mujahidana Karnamey*, Delhi, 1942, part I, p. 100.
4. Hume to Auckland Colvin, 13 October 1888, *The Pioneer Mail*, IOL.
5. Hume to Badruddin Tyabji, 5 October 1888, *Tyabji Papers*, reel 2, *SOAS*.
6. *Ibid.*

read and write in the Punjab".[1] But these theological subterfuges had little effect on Sir Syed's popularity in the Punjab or elsewhere.

Hume even did not spare Sir Syed's character, and did not let any scruples to interfere with his anti-Syed tirades. He claimed to know of certain facts about Sir Syed and the anti-Congress movement, which presumably prevented him from having any "faith in his veracity except on the hypothesis...that age has dimmed his once clear faculties, and that he is no longer altogether responsible for much that he says and does where the Congress is concerned.[2] Thus Sir Syed was dubbed as a senile cypher who was no better than an instrument of the British bureaucracy. What an ironic self-contradiction, that in the same breath Hume should have accused the same doting Sir Syed of dividing the country and inciting his Wahhabi followers who were now making "frantic and unprincipled efforts...to get up rows and fights over the matter, and so if possible give our movement the bad name due to their own misdeeds".[3] Nothing could be farther from truth, for Sir Syed consistently prescribed strict observance of loyalty, and mischief mongering could be the least credible charge against him. But contradictions and falsehoods abounded in Hume's argument. For Hume it was nothing new, Dufferin had described him to be 'a little cracked, unscruplous, and...very careless of truth."[4] It was not surprising therefore, if of all the people even Sir Syed was not spared of charges of treason and conspiracy. Hume reiterated that Sir Syed had aroused his Wahhabi disciples who "in their hearts hate the British government, who look forward to ousting them and regaining the rule of the country, and who in this movement perceive the final overthrow of their hopes,...energetic, clever, unscrupulous, far seeing men, fare very active against us, and are making a great show and noise.'[5] This argument reveals Hume's mental derangement. If Sir Syed was planning the recovery of Muslim rule by force, how could the British rulers have countenanced his treason ? These inane insinuations exposed the Government to the charges of gullibility and incriminated Sir Syed of treason. But, both of these allegations had the least relevance to facts. Turning about dramatically, Hume berated the British for turning the head of their protege and heaped abuse on Sir Syed :

'I do not believe that he is the wilful and shameless liar and turncoat

1. *Ibid.*
2. Hume to Auckland Colvin, 13 October 1888, *The Pioneer Mail.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Dufferin to Sir H. Maine*, 9 May 1886, *DC*, Microfilm No. 525, IOL.
5. *Hume to Badruddin Tyabji*, 5 November 1888, *Tyabji Papers.*

> that his speeches and writings would make him appear. I believe that his popularity with European officials and his K. C. S. I. and the favour recently shown by the Viceroy and the adulation of that old Beck, and his immediate entourage have completely turned his head.[1]

Much ado has been made of the conferment of K. C. S. I. on Sir Syed. That Sir Syed was honoured with the K. C. S. I. three days after his Lucknow speech,[2] was not an instant reward, and any such inference can only be drawn through utter disregard of the procedures for the grant of awards.[3] But that was not all, Hume also insinuated that Sir Syed's speech was a got up affair and not a matter of conviction. Hume absolved Dufferin of having inspired Sir Syed's speech, but claimed that 'ridiculously violent speech'[4] was made at the instance of Auckland Colvin. Now Hume cleverly suggested that this impression had been given by Sir Syed in private. But there is no evidence to substantiate this charge except his own malice. But on his own, Dufferin denied any such involvement, in a communication to the Secretary of State. Surely he could not tell lies, in a confidential letter, to his superior. Dufferin affirmed that Muslims had abstained from the Congress, "entirely in accordance with their views of what is politic, and not at all under any pressure from the officials".[5] He maintained that the policy of planting "the seeds of dissension" between the different classes would ultimately boomerang on the Government. Muslims had abstained from the Congress for their own reasons :

> What the Mahomedans feel is that under a Bengalee Constitution they would be more completely left in the cold than they are at present. . .[6]

He denied the allegations of having incited the Muslim opposition to the Congress, and explained the origin of these accusations.

> "the extreme section of the Radical press in this country, not knowing what to do in their rage at the opposition which has been offered to the Congress by the Mahomedans, and many of the higher Hindu classes, have resorted to the absurd device of attributing the split to my Machiavelian cunning.[7]

1. *Ibid.*
2. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
3. The recommendations for the grant of awards originated with the provincial governments in case of Indians, and the Viceroy endorsed those to the Secretary of State who after obtaining royal approval authorised the formal conferment of titles. This process took many months to complete.
4. *Auckland to Hume*, 8 October 1888. *The Pioneer Mail*, 7 November 1888,
5. *Dufferin to Cross*, 29 October 1888, *DC.*, Vol. 21, IOL.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*

Dufferin also disclaimed having shown "the slightest partiality towards them," and asserted that he had refused the Muslim demand for special concessions, and had done nothing more for them than an expression of "sympathy, with their backwardness."[1] This was an unambiguous rebuttal of the allegations, that the anti-Congress movement launched by Muslims was a hand-maiden of the Government, and the Muslim leaders including Sir Syed took their cue from Calcutta.

Sir Syed was not insensitive to the spate of wild allegations and slanders set afloat against him by the Congress leaders and the Hindu press. He lashed out at them all in a scathing rejoinder to his old detractor Hume, and berated him for having ascribed to him such ideas "which he would hardly attribute to the meanest and guiltiest of mankind."[2] Since Hume had also grown old, it was likely that as a result of "his close intimacy with Bengalis, his methods of thought may well have been distorted into this most un-English character."[3] But the quintessence of his political creed was reflected in the following remarks :

> "I assure Mr. Hume that, even if Sir Auckland Colvin, Lord Dufferin, the Secretary of State for India, and the whole House of Commons had declared in favour of the Congress, I should remain as firmly opposed to it as ever, and I earnestly beg all Mahomedans of India to be constant and determined in their opposition. For it is my deliberate belief, that should the resolutions of the National Congress be carried into effect, it would be impossible for the British Government to preserve peace in India, or control in any degree the violence of the civil war that would ensue....A European gentleman once asked me, "Should matters ever come to this phase what will you do ?" I at once answered. "If I live to see that day I will myself become a leader in the war."[4]

Undoubtedly, Sir Syed was inspired by a sense of mission in opposing the Congress. He stood for Muslim rights first, and for loyalty surely if it served that purpose. Sir Syed was not only vigilant, he was also prescient, and his prognosis of Hindu Muslim strife was confirmed by subsequent communal conflicts and the blood-stained events of 1947. He stepped up his anti-Congress campaign when after 1888 the forces of Hindu

1. *Ibid.*
2. Sir Syed's reply to Hume, *Englishman*, 13 November 1888, IOL
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

communalism began to line up behind the Congress. The anti-Cow-slaughter Movement was countenanced by the Congress, and when Bal Gangadhar Tilak mustered the forces of ultra-Hinduism under his saffron banner, he was hailed by the Congress. Orthodox bodies like the Hindu Maha Mandal dedicated themselves to the task of social reform and left the Hindu political front to the Congress.[1] This posed a greater challenge to the Muslims than ever before.

To confound Muslim public opinion, rumours were spread that now Sir Syed was favourably disposed towards the Congress. He sternly repudiated these inspired reports for he had neither flinched nor failed in his anti-Congress campaign. On the eve of Indian Councils Bill in 1891, he opposed the application of elective system to India, which unlike England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, was a continent divided by different races, religions and cultures. The Congress hypothesis that India was one country was a delusion. Democracy suited the genius of Anglo-Saxon people but had failed in case of many Latin nations, and was not a panacea for all the people, for all the countries and for all times.[2] In India, even if the majority was fit to rule, should it be allowed to lord over an unwilling minority. Though Muslims were a minority, they constituted the second largest mass of people. Under such conditions, if the majority ever transgressed their rights they would resist by force.[3] Towards the end of 1893, there spread a wave of Hindu-Muslim riots which excluded all chances of Hindu cooperation in an anti-Congress movement. So Sir Syed was obliged to change his tactics, and in order to harness English cooperation against the Congress, he established the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India.[4] Though the aims and objects of this Association were not different from those of the United Indian Patriotic Association, it proved to be a lame duck from the very start due to the inherent incompatibility of British and Muslim interests. Sir Syed strived to serve the cause of the new Association, but after 1895 the affairs of MAO college began to monopolize his attention.[5] His health also began to fail after the bereavement of his son.[6] Gradually he ceased to play a leading role in the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association, but his opposition to the Congress, which had matured into a firm principle through the years, remained unchanged to the last.

1. *Hindustan*, 15 January 1891, cited in *NWPNR, 1891*, IOL.
2. Imam-ud-Din, ed. *Akhari Mazamin*, Lahore, n.d. p. 45.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-52.
4. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 313.
5. Muhammad Ameen Zubairi, *Tazkira-i-Sir Syed*, pp. 120-21.
6. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

Sir Syed and Political Agitation

Did the Congress movement really introduce the ideas of Irish Agitation into the framework of Indian political reference? Sir Syed, ever sensitive to nuances of political life, denounced the Congress Agitation as a replica of Irish Agitation. More often he insisted on styling the "Congress Agitation" as a "Bengali Agitation."[1] For this very reason perhaps, Sir Syed taunted the Congress with temerity and held it up to many a derisive comparison. Ridiculing the Congress Agitation in his Lucknow speech he challenged, "There are in Ireland thousands of men ready to give up their lives at the point of sword,... will you kindly point out to me ten amongst the agitators in India who could face the bayonets".[2] He put his own interpretation on the Congress movement, and insisted on equating it with Irish agitation. He observed :

> "Another word they have learnt is agitation, and they declare: Look ! How the Irish people agitate against Government proposals. How do they form associations and societies for the sake of agitation. And how do they express what they like in their speeches and writings. And then they have concluded, that the English Government is afraid of agitation, and without agitation nothing could be gained from the Government. Then they have inferred that if the agitation was not widespread, and if all the people were not united, it could not be effective agitation. So they have begun to spread the agitation among the people. But there could be no agitation unless the defects of the Government whether right or wrong were not propagated among the people. And this very concept was the basis of National Congress... Though we are not convinced that this group of agitators is bent upon rebellion, or is inciting rebellion, still their actions do create a general disaffection against the Government."[3]

Sir Syed's denunciation of the Congress Agitation as an Irish sedition, did not carry conviction even with his associate Beck, who regretted Sir Syed's jibes about Bengali temerity, and said it was "a brutal way of putting things."[4] Beck clarified the differences between the Congress and Irish Agitation :

> There are certain curious points of resemblance between the Irish and Indian movements, but there are also wide differences that the

1. Munshi Siraj-ud-Din Ahmad, *Majmu'a*, p. 249, 257.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Imam-ud-Din, *Akhari Mazamin*, p. 67.

4. *AIG*, 14 February, 1889. (By courtesy of Prof. Sheikh A. Rashid who supplied this reference).

analogy affords less instruction...The Congress movement in India is opposed by a powerful party...in the first place the Anglo-Indian official class...and in the second place the great bulk of the Mohammedans, who number about one fifth of the total population... perhaps as large a proportion as a reasonable Irish Unionist would claim for the thoroughly Unionist population in his country. The political differences between the Congress and anti-Congress sections of the population in India is the consequence of social and religious differences. But with that the resemblance between the Irish and Indian situation ends.[1]

Sir Syed was not justified in drawing a parallel between the Irish agitation and the Congress movement. But here arise two questions:

(1) Was the Congress movement really agitational ?

(2) How far was Sir Syed justified in interdicting political agitation for the Muslims ?

Sir Syed's first assumption, that the Congress movement was mostly inspired by the discontented Bengali intelligentsia and bourgeoisie was a statement of political fact. But his second assumption that the Congress and Irish agitations were identical in their aims and methods was tendentious and unrealistic. The Congress was loyal, both in theory and in practice. The Congress leaders were in no way inferior to Sir Syed in their professions of loyalty to the Government. In the second session of the Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji declared :

"Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone (cheers); that we understand the benefits English rule has conferred upon us; that we thoroughly appreciate the education that has been given to us; the new light which has been poured upon us, turning us from darkness into light and teaching us new lesson that kings are made for the people, not the peoples for their kings; and this new lesson we have learnt amidst the darkness of Asiatic despotism only by the light of free English civilization.[2]

Badruddin Tyabji apostrophized :

"I should like to know where among all the millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India are to be found more truly loyal, nay, more devoted friends of the British Empire than among these educated natives."[3]

1. *Ibid.*

2. J. K. Majumdar, *Indian Speeches and Documents of British Rule*, Calcutta 1937, p. 136.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

In 1890, Pherozeshah Mehta in his presidential address, wished to "make the connection of England and India a blessing to themselves and to the whole world for countless generations."[1] It is not difficult to pile up Congress professions of loyalty to counterbalance Sir Syed's protestations of allegiance. In relation to Government, the Congress followed methods of "political beggary and petition".[2] The humble petitions, memorials and resolutions of the Congress for the holding of simultaneous examinations, or for the repeal of Arms Act etc. could hardly be styled as factious or agitational. Sir Syed himself had espoused these causes at one time or the other. Since the elective principle had been partially extended to the local bodies, any demand for its application to Legislative Councils could not be construed as a prelude to rebellion. The elective principle was not incompatible with Muslim national interests, and Ameer Ali advocated it.

The loyalist Congress policies could not be compared with Irish Agitation comprising Parnellian obstructionism, boycotts, riots, processions and rebellions. It is rather ironic, that the constitutional methods like petitioning, public meetings, resolutions, and pamphlets, which Sir Syed employed himself for combating the Congress, should have been dubbed as mischievous and seditious when used by the Congress. Though some of the Congress literature seemed too hot to the loyalists, it was far from being treasonable. His zeal overflowed his discretion in equating the word political with agitational, violent, seditious and unconstitutional. The existence of any Irish type of Agitation could be safely excluded from contemporary political life in India.

Since Muslims had rejected the Congress by an overwhelming majority, Sir Syed was not at all justified in interdicting peaceful and constitutional political activity as an instrument of Muslim policy. His connotation of political agitation was not warranted by facts. In this he overlooked the difference between political organization and political agitation. Sir Syed reiterated his argument that Muslims should eschew political organizations at all costs for the sake of an un-interrupted educational progress. He was apprehensive of the emotional nature of his own people, who would have readily abandoned the drab task of educational development for the more exciting pursuit of political agitation.[3] If in 1888 the Hindus could not experiment in Irish Agitation, how could the backward and disorganized Muslims have embarked on such a Quixotic adventure. Viewed in this light, Sir Syed's apprehensions of a Muslim agitation were

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-48.
2. I. N., Topa, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
3. Muhammad Sarwar, *Mazamin-i-Muhammad Ali*, Vol. I., Delhi, 1938, pp. 283-4.

alarmist and propagandist. In European sense of the term, political agitation was premature and inopportune both for Hindus and the Muslims. Nevertheless, Sir Syed continued to denounce political agitation, and advised Muslims :

> Whatever good we can expect is from the English, the Bengalis can do us no good....So we must adopt the policy of abstaining from political noise and agitation. We should ponder over our condition, and we would discover that we are backward in education, are inferior in higher education, we are deficient in wealth. Then let us exert in educating our people....If my people would heed this advice, they would reap the advantage of government and trade, otherwise, remember the Government would keep a watchful eye on you, for you are great mischief mongers, for you are very valiant soldiers, for you are great warriors.[1]

No doubt, political agitation would have been harmful for the Muslims. But, if the Congress politics was not agitational, why did Sir Syed persist in dubbing it as political agitation. It seems, to scare away Muslims from the Congress, he raised the bogey of agitational politics and magnified its dangers in 'awe-inspiring words'[2] by recalling the horrors of 1857. He conjured up a gory spectacle of the British vendetta visited upon Muslims after the tragedy of 1857. But in 1888 the circumstances were very different. It is unthinkable therefore, that British Government should have singled out Muslims, and mobilized its forces to crush them for a constitutional organization, while it recognized the Central National Mahomedan Association and appreciated the Indian National Congress. By recalling the national trauma of 1857 Sir Syed sought to generate feelings of fear and suspicion which no Congress propaganda would have dispelled, otherwise dangers of an agitational politics to Muslims were imaginary and hypothetical.

In reality, Sir Syed sought to dissuade Muslims from the path of independent political organization by exaggerating the hazards of political agitation. This explanation seems plausible, if it is appreciated that Syed Ameer Ali and Muharram Ali Chishti were contemplating the organization of an All India Muslim Conference as a counterblast to the Congress. Unlike Sir Syed, Muharram Ali Chishti was not averse to political agitation, and in an expose of political movement in India, he maintained that :

> "This was not due to any example of Mr. Parnell, but is the expression of the natural force of public opinion. To fight against such a force

1. Munshi Siraj-ud-Din Ahmad, *Majmu'a*, pp. 260-67.

2. Abul-Darrjat, article, "Indian National Congress Aur Sir Syed Ahmad Khan Bahadur," *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, Lahore, 4 June 1888, PUL.

would be fighting nature. However, the citing of Irish example is for the good of Indians, in the sense, that the Government should now appreciate the consequences of the suppression of the public sentiment as in the case of Irish people".[1]

Sir Syed was not insensitive to such radical opinions, especially when they came from the pen of Muharram Ali Chishti, the stormy spirit of the Punjab branch of the Central National Mahomedan Association. Naturally Sir Syed wanted to discourage Muslim intelligentsia from treading dangerous political paths. Perhaps his Lucknow speech was made against this background. But when in early 1888, Syed Ameer Ali and Muharram Ali Chishti openly sponsored the scheme of an independent All India Muslim Political Conference, he administered a stern warning and anathematized political agitation in his Meerut speech. For him, this served the double purpose of cannalizing anti-Congress movement and scuttling the idea of an All India Muslim Political Conference.

Sir Syed's resolute rejection of political agitation was essentially a political decision and in no way different from the Congress actions. As the Congress represented the thesis of one Indian nation, and Sir Syed symbolized anti-thesis of multi-national India; they stood in a state of political conflict. In a way, the Congress movement and Sir Syed represented two dynamic but opposing principles, contending for quantum of power which was the real point of tension between them.

To interpret Sir Syed's policy as passivism and negativism therefore, would be unrealistic. That Muslims were not powerful enough to demand their due political share and should for the time being muster strength through education was not altogether invalid. Forgetting his iconoclastic temper, his successors made a fetish of his educational policy, and failed to reorientate their political goals in face of new challenges. But some non-Aligarh leaders appreciated the urgent need for a political organization, and thus gave another dimension to Muslim politics of the period.

The Mahomedan Political Conference

Syed Ameer Ali seemed to have adopted the policy of wait and see, when in November 1886, the Central National Mahomedan Association decided to abstain from the Congress. Perhaps, during 1887 the Association appraised the Congress politics to determine its own future course of action towards the Congress movement. Ameer Ali calculated that

1. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 10 April, 1886.

the Congress would soon gain ground among Muslims if they were left without a comparable political organization of their own. At best, Muslim abstention from the Congress would be a temporary expedient, and could not be developed as a positive instrument of Muslim political rights. Muslim opposition to the Congress, even though well justified was a negative measure, and could not hold for long the allegiance of Muslims who were being subjected to persistent Congress propaganda throughout the country. The CNMA could not overlook the psychological dangers inherent in a defensive posture with all its demoralizing effects on the ethos of the Muslim nation. The political future of a nation of fifty million could not be conceived as a re-action mechanism to the Congress. Consequently, Ameer Ali took the initiative and called a conference of Muslim leaders and intelligentsia from all over the India, to chalk out a common political programme. The proposal was opportune as it came, "at the time when the Indian leaders were preparing for the Third Session of the Congress."[1] First of all, he took up the issue with Barduddin Tyabji, the President designate of the Third Congress, and impressed upon him that in view of "the growing solidarity"[2] among the Muslims, there was a "necessity of working in cooperation to achieve material progress and political advancement." He set forth his argument for a Muslim Conference:

> It is patent that as long as we have no unanimity of views and unity of action in the furtherance of our legitimate and constitutional interests under the British Government, so long we shall form a community of secondary importance in the eyes of our rulers, and will not attain any substantial success in the work of political advancement. Pressed by these considerations I propose to convene a Conference of Mussulman delegates for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th day of February 1888.[3]

He hoped that the Conference would "be unique in character, and will confer *benefits* on the Mahommedans of India by drawing together the *bonds* of brotherhood and sympathy and will give them double impetus to *their* political development".[4]

Badruddin Tyabji, in his reply, raised the question about "the exact position you desire the proposed Mahomedan Conference to take up in regard to the other Communities.[5] Nevertheles he advised, "in regard

1. Husain B. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
2. Ameer Ali to Hon'ble Badruddin Tyabji, 28 November, 1887, *Tyabji Papers*, Microfilm SOAS.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, italics as in the original.
5. Badruddin Tyabji to Syed Ameer Ali, 3 September 1887, *Ibid.*

to political questions at large the Mussalmans should make a common cause with their fellow countrymen," and regretted that Muslims of Calcutta had abstained from the Congress. Expressing his misgivings about the aims of the Mahomedan Political Conference, he observed:

> If therefore the proposed Mahomedan Conference is started simply to rival the General National Congress, I should be entirely opposed to it—as it seems to me that our proper course is to join the Congress at Madras, and to take part in its deliberations from our peculiar standpoint. If on the other hand it is not started in any spirit of rivalry, I fail to understand why we should have a separate Conference at all, because in that case our discussions would not be on political questions so much as on moral and social questions.[1]

Badruddin Tyabji did not like the emergence of a Muslim Conference as a parallel organization to the Congress, and sought further clarifications about "the programme of business"[2] of the Conference. Since Ameer Ali was more anxious to gain support than to raise a controversy, he hastened to dispel "certain erroneous impressions" about the aims and scope of the Mahomedan Political Conference. He explained its rationale:

> Our main object is to bring about some degree of solidarity among the disintegrated masses of Mahomedan society, to reconcile in some measure the conflicting aims and objects of different sections and parties, to introduce some amount of harmony among the discordant and jarring elements of which the Mussulman educated classes are composed; to devise some means of self-help for Mahomedan advancement, and to lean less upon Government patronage, to give real impetus to the forces of self development..., to safeguard legitimate and constitutional interests under British Government, to become the exponent of voice and aspirations of educated Mahomedan India, and to serve as the means of reconciliation between our Hindoo fellow subjects and our community.[3]

In short, this body was designed to prepare "the ground work" of Muslim political progress. Ameer Ali gave him the assurance that the Conference would have an "extremely moderate" programme and it had "not been actuated by any spirit of rivalry towards our Hindu compatriots".[4] Like the Congress, it envisaged a common political platform for the educated Muslims. Undoubtedly it was a blueprint of an independent Muslim

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. Ameer Ali to Badruddin Tyabji, 5 January 1888, *Tyabji Papers, Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

political organization, which though not implemented in 1888, remained valid till 1906. No other Muslim political leader except Syed Ameer Ali has greater claim to be considered as the forerunner of the All India Muslim League.

Ameer Ali's letter to Badruddin Tyabji carried a postscript that "owing to certain unavoidable causes"[1] the Conference had been postponed till February 1889. The reasons for this postponement were not explained. Since Sir Syed's Lucknow speech on 28 December 1887, a great furore had been created and pro-Congress Muslims were quite agitated, Ameer Ali might have decided that political climate was not favourable for a broad-based Muslim Political Conference. Muslim consensus was impossible in that state of bitter confrontation, even though Badruddin Tyabji had taken a sympathetic view of the aims of the Conference set forth by Ameer Ali in his previous letter. Exhorting the educated Muslims "to do their utmost to raise their co-religionists from the state of poverty and ignorance",[2] Badruddin Tyabji had appreciated "any combined action on the part of the leaders of our community with a view to improve moral, social, educational and political status" of the Muslims, but reiterated "that in regard to general political questions affecting India as a whole, it is the duty of all educated...citizens to work together quite irrespective of their caste, colour, or creed".[3] However, he conceded, that in matters that affect our community separately or specially, I hold it to be equally the duty of all enlightened Mahomedans to do what they can individually or conjointly to ameliorate the condition of our people".[4] This did not rule out limited Muslim action on political questions. Though he agreed to attend the Conference, his acceptance was hedged by several reservations. At the most, Badruddin Tyabji was willing to assign the role of social and educational reform to the Conference, and did not like it to stand up as an equal of the Congress in political affairs. Since this interpretation of inter-communal equation excluded separate Muslim political entity, Ameer Ali was no longer interested to continue correspondence with Badruddin Tyabji on this subject.

Though the Conference was postponed, Ameer Ali did not slacken his efforts in propagating it. He was invited by the Punjab branch to visit Lahore,[5] but before he could respond to their call, Muharram Ali Chishti undertook a journey to Calcutta and discussed matters pertaining to

1. *Ibid.*
2. Badruddin Tyabji to Syed Ameer Ali, 13 January 1888, *Tyabji Papers, Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Rafiq-i-Hind,* 25 February 1888.

Muslim welfare.[1] A public meeting was held under the presidentship of Syed Ameer Ali in which the Punjabi leader explained the proposal for the establishment of a Muslim Political Conference.[2] Soon after, Ameer Ali issued a public appeal urging the establishment of an All India Muslim Political Conference.[3] The publication of this appeal, brought Sir Syed into the arena "with the sword of his pen, ready to slaughter the Conference". He wrote a number of "vehement articles"[4] denouncing the very idea of the Association. In an exceptionally pungent rejoinder Muharram Ali Chishti castigated Sir Syed and tore his argument to shreds. For its political significance and literary merit it should rank high among the documents of Muslim politics and journalism:

> "We have never considered, that like the Almighty, actions of the Government are beyond reproach and without room for improvement ...We opposed the Congress, but at the same time urged our countrymen to take full interest in politics. We called upon them not to hesitate in representing their true and legitimate rights to the Government. Along with this, we have held that it would be of immense advantage, if the Muslims of India hold a separate conference of their own annually to discuss their political and social affairs and to represent their legitimate and proper rights to the Government respectfully. Such an idea is in conformity with the spirit of Islam...We are rightly glad that the great Muslim leader who has been the first in public opposition to the Congress, has also been foremost in conceiving the idea of a Muslim Conference...[5]

Sir Syed repudiated the proposal of Muslim Conference vehemently, and to cut the ground from under the feet of its protagonists, he hastened to bolster up the Indian Patriotic Association. Sir Syed's opposition undermined the prospect of a Muslim Political Conference. Some Punjabi gentlemen, perhaps under the influence of Muharram Ali Chishti, were irked at the delay plaguing the Conference and came out with an alternative proposal for holding a Muslim Conference in Lahore to discuss the political, social and educational requirements of the Punjabi Muslims, and to consider the problems of the Punjabi zamindars.[6] They

1. 31 March 1888, *Ibid.*
2. 19 May 1888, *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.* Only a small passage of this long article has been translated here. It was later reprinted in the *Rafiq-i-Hind* of 28 July 1900, but with the references to the Congress excised. I have copied the original from late Mr. Ibrahim Ali Chishti, son of Muharram Ali Chishti.
6. 3 November 1888, *Ibid.*

proposed to hold their own parallel conference and decided to boycott Sir Syed's Muhammadan Educational Conference which was to hold its session in Lahore in December 1888.[1]

Nevertheless, the proposed Muslim Conference in Lahore was likely to give offence to Sir Syed for its timing and intention, and the situation was further complicated by the unfortunate showdown between Muharram Ali Chishti and Sir Syed.

Sir Syed equated political organization with political agitation, and under no circumstances was willing to concede the political bonafides of the Muslim Political Conference, despite the pleading of Syed Ameer Ali. Sir Syed himself admitted :

> When I was in Calcutta, Maulvi Ameer Ali came to see me. He argued with me at length, and pressed me to join the Muhammadan Conference, but I refused, as I did not agree with the aims of the Muhammadan National Conference. In my opinion, it is improper for Muslims to resort to any form of political agitation. And no one in India dare take up political agitation.[2]

Sir Syed had already applied the same logic in tabooing the Muslim Conference in Lahore, which was essentially a replica of Ameer Ali's Muslim Conference. Though rather sardonic, Sir Syed was candid in owning responsibility for interdicting the concept of a Muslim Political Conference. He wrote to Chishti:

> I firmly hold that no Indian community can venture into political agitation, and Muslims should eschew it in particular. Though I am not a member of Maulvi Ameer Ali's Association, I have exerted friendly pressure on him to postpone his proposed Conference, and I am confident it will have effect.[3]

Clearly he had taken upon himself to enforce an embargo on Muslim political activity in any form and from any quarter. He wanted Ameer Ali and others to fall in line with his policy of loyalism. Sir Syed held loyalty and political activity to be mutually exclusive, but Ameer Ali regarded these factors as complementary. And, if Ameer Ali did not subscribe to Sir Syed's connotation of loyalty, he was no less loyal than Sir Syed. Apprehensions of political agitation had been magnified by Sir Syed to an extent that was least warranted by logic and circumstances.

Though Ameer Ali shared his concern for Muslim unity with other

1. *Ibid.*

2. Sir Syed Ahmad to Maulvi Niaz Muhammad Khan, 10 December 1888, *Khutut-i-Sir Syed*, p. 276.

3. Syed Ahmad Khan to Muharram Ali Chishti, 14 December, 1888, *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 28 July, 1900.

educated Muslims, he had not renounced his thesis of a Muslim Political Conference. After recounting the factors leading to the postponement of the Muslim Political Conference in his reply to Sir Syed's letter of 14 December 1888, Ameer Ali emphasized the need for national unity as an overriding political aim:

> A number of articles have appeared in the press giving an impression that serious differences have arisen among the Muslims. And that impression is most likely to harm our national interests....I have always admired Sir Syed as a respected leader of our nation, well-known for his sympathy and solicitude for the nation....It is most unfortunate, that at this juncture the Muslims of India should have displayed their disunity, and belittled themselves in the eyes of other communities.[1]

He then expounded the rationale of Muslim Conference in words which for their significance constitute the testament of his political thought:

> In view of the present condition and the future problems of the believers in Islam, we had proposed the holding of a Muslim Conference. It is a dire necessity that such a Conference should be held....Our Hindu brethren do exercise their collective strength through their organization...They have several newspapers in English, they possess abundance of wealth, and hold cultural supremacy. Whenever they present certain matters in a collective manner through their associations, public bodies and newspapers, or they give expression to their opinions on certain issues in a similar way, the Government immediately feels the force of their opinion...I am extremely pained that due to the pusillanimity and short-sightedness of our people, the Conference has been postponed. But I am sure, day by day the need of such a conference would become clear and apparent.[2]

Ameer Ali's attempt to impart self-reliance to Muslim politics had come to naught. It was indeed ironic that Muslim educational effort should have been veritably independent, but Muslim political activity subservient. An anomaly in Muslim political life thus became sanctified as a result of Ameer Ali's failure. While Sir Syed had prescribed education as a primary aim, he got politics excluded from the domain of national effort. No doubt, Ameer Ali's withdrawal from the contest against Sir Syed saved Muslim unity. But at what a price! It was a semblance of unity without any substance of strength. Ameer Ali's reluctance to give battle to Sir Syed,

1. Ameer Ali to Muharram Ali Chishti, 24 January 1889, *Rafiq-i-Hind*. (This letter was written in Urdu—English translation by the author.)

2. *Ibid.*

for the sake of his political credo and leadership was nothing short of a political suicide and compromised his position in the eyes of those who were willing to follow him. Ameer Ali missed being the greatest political leader of Muslim India in the later 19th century. If the struggle for leadership implied a war of wills, surely Sir Syed had a greater will than Ameer Ali. Ameer Ali's retirement from the political contest also marked his exit from active politics. Muslims were thus deprived of his leadership which had guided them for almost quarter of a century. The field lay clear and open for Sir Syed who emerged as the only leader of Muslim India, and his policies were destined to shape the Muslim political future. A nation untrained in political action, for some time, did thrive on Government sufferance, but when the Government began to show open deference for collective strength of the politically organised Hindu, the Muslim was left bewildered for he had no political instrument to voice his national demands. After all Sir Syed had only been successful but for the present, Ameer Ali's ideas held the promise for the future.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORIGIN OF SEPARATE MUSLIM REPRESENTATION

Local Self-Government

The demand for separate Muslim representation evolved as a consequence of the policy of associating the local people with the English administration of India. This policy was dictated by political expediency after the events of 1857-58. Dalhousie and Bartle Frere had advocated the idea of associating educated Indians with the Indian administration, but after 1858 an urgent need was felt to reorientate English policy and to enlarge the base of British rule by securing wider public support and sympathy. Sir Syed had also pointed out "the evils which resulted to India from the non-admission of natives into the Legislative Council of India".[1] Now the Government realized that it could no longer shut its eyes to the political situation in the sub-continent and was firmly resolved to "put all our institutions there on the soundest possible foundation."[2] For the first time, the principle of the admission of Indians to the Governor General's Legislative Council and Provincial Councils was conceded by the Councils Act of 1861, by which additional Indian members could participate in the work of the Councils for the purpose of law making, but could not vote.[3] The Government sought to reinforce its authority by associating wealthy and influential persons, who were attached to British rule and had a "larger stake in its stability and power."[4] Though the Councils Act of 1861 altered the constitution of India,[5] it did not envisage any delegation of powers to the Indian members who held their nominal positions on official sufferance. This brought about a change of form

1. C. H. Philips, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
2. H. H. Dodwell, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
3. Philips, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

rather than substance. Essentially a means of administrative convenience and economy, this measure accorded a grudging recognition to the political aspirations of educated Indians. Naturally the next step was the association of Indians with the lower tiers of the administration, but the Government wanted to implement it in a way that should involve a minimal transfer of power to the Indians. The Central and Provincial Legislatures were excluded from the application of this policy. This would explain why the Councils constituted under the Act of 1861 remained unaltered till 1892.

The first signs of change, manifested themselves in the sphere of local self-government, and even there, the delegation of authority to Indians was effected as a by-product of the policy of decentralization of power from the Central Government to the Provincial Governments. Lawrence, in order to shift the financial burden for the improvement and maintenance of the police force[1] to the towns, invoked the principle of local self-government. He affirmed that 'the municipal feeling is deeply rooted'[2] among the peoples of India, and considered it advisable:

> to leave as much as possible of the business of the country to be done by the people, by means of funds raised by themselves, and to confine ourselves to doing those things which must be done by the Government, and to influencing and directing in a general way all the movements of the social machine.[3]

Similarly, in 1870, Mayo made an experiment of a rudimentary nature and incorporated proposals of local self-Government in his scheme regarding the decentralization of finances to the Provincial Governments. Mayo hoped thereby to "afford opportunities for the development of self-government . . . and for the association of Natives and Europeans to a greater extent than heretofore, in the administration of affairs."[4] Even though the Provincial Governments delegated to the local bodies some authority to levy taxes and spend the funds, the local bodies "failed to develop into organs of self-government."[5] Since no efforts were made to obtain Indian representation the local bodies were nothing better than the hand-maidens of English district officers.

1. *The Gazette of India Extraordinary*, 14 September 1864, pp. 12-13, cited by C. H. Philips, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

4. Resolution on Provincial Finance, 14 December 1870, cited by P. Mukherji, *Indian Constitutional Documents, 1600-1918*, Calcutta, 1918, pp. 629-30.

5. R. J. Moore, *Liberalism in Indian Politics*, London 1966, p. 32.

The Government did not entertain any clear concept of an electoral system which should form the basis of local self-government. In 1870, the experiment of holding elections by wards in N. W. Provinces had "demonstrated the artificiality of a ward system, and the representation of trades or castes was substituted."[1] Without a clear definition of electoral system, the local bodies could make little headway. To conform to the political reality the electoral system had to reflect the communal composition of Indian life in local self-government. This problem assumed importance when the educated Indians of Bombay and Calcutta[2] began to petition for the application of representative principle to the local bodies.[3] What form should that representation take, neither the petitioners nor the Government envisaged any particular constitutional arrangement. The Bengal Legislative Council appointed a Select Committee in order to investigate this matter.[4] The Select Committee recommended that of the fifty-four elected members, twenty seven to be Hindus, nine Mahomedans.[5]" The number of Hindu and Muslim members accorded with their numerical strength of 65.37% and 31.22% respectively in the total population of Bengal[6] including Bihar, Assam and Orissa. For political reasons, the Europeans were over-represented but the Hindu and Muslim representation did bear some relevance to the overall communal pattern of Bengal. The Select Committee further recommended that the metropolis should be divided into wards to enable the Government "to fix the number and nationality of Commissioners to be elected by each ward."[7] Kristo Das Pal dissented from this rule "requiring the electors to elect persons belonging to a particular section of the community for particular wards."[8] His dissent was ignored, and the Government issued a rule which gave recognition to the fact that Hindus and Muslims were two separate political entities. Since Hindu Muslim differences preexisted, it would be futile to brand this regulation as a manifestation of the policy of divide and rule. On the contrary it embodied a formula by

1. H. Tinker, *Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma*, London, 1954, p. 48.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

3. *Ibid.*

4. 'A Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Municipal Affairs of Calcutta as amended by the Select Committee', *Legislative Proceedings, Government of India, 1876*, Vol. 1017, IOL.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Report of the Census of British India*, 17 February 1881, Vol. I, London, 1883.

7. *Legislative Proceedings, Government of India, 1876*, Vol. 1017.

8. *Ibid.*

which the two discordant communities could be brought together in the local self-government. Herein lay the rudimentary pattern of separate Muslim representation. Since Muslims stood to gain as a separate political entity under this rule, the Hindus led by Kristo Das Pal protested vehemently against it. But in contrast, Muslims were neither educated nor organized to have raised their voice in defence of this rule. Nevertheless the application of this rule registered no significant improvement in the representation of Muslims of Calcutta. As a result of high qualifications for franchise only 604 Muslims were enlisted as voters in comparison with 6,025 Hindu voters.[1] Though separate electorate was introduced in the Calcutta municipality, the Bombay municipality still continued to employ the system of joint electorates.[2] Undoubtedly the introduction of separate electorate in Calcutta was limited in scope and tentative in nature, but this experiment marked a significant departure from the hitherto accepted practice of joint electorate which postulated that Hindus and Muslims were one nation.

Ripon enriched and enlarged the sphere of local self-government. Not considering the development of local bodies as a by-product of financial decentralization, he sponsored them as an agent of material advancement and political enlightenment. Accordingly he formulated the Resolution of 18 May 1882, setting forth the aims and methods of local self-government in India.

> It is not, primarily, with a view to improvement in administration that the measure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education.[3]

He sought to make a 'cautious, yet at the same time real and substantial' advancement in local self-government and envisaged the association of the 'intelligent class of public spirited men' who had emerged all over India as a result of English education. Necessarily, official control of the local bodies had to be lessened by extending in some measure the principle of election to the local bodies. The Local Governments were invested with the discretion to elect the members of the district boards, wherever feasible, but the principle of election was not to be adopted 'in all cases'.[4] Neither the elections were mandatory, nor the uniformity in electoral system was

1. H. M. Kish, officiating Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Municipal No. 603, 12 July 1881, *Parliamentary Papers, 1883*, Vol. LI. BM.

2. *Legislative Proceedings, Government of India, 1876*, Vol. 1017.

3. 'Resolution of the Government of India, 18 May 1882,' *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. LI. BM.

4. *Ibid.*

considered always to be desirable and practicable. The Local Governments were empowered to evolve their own electoral systems, and could even experiment in a variety of electoral methods to suit the requirements and circumstances of the local populations. But invariably the qualifications for voters were kept high so as to restrict the electorate to the upper strata of Indian society.[1] The Local Self-Government Bill for the Central Provinces embodied the principles of the Resolution of 18 May 1882, and being the first of its kind, this Bill served as a model for other provinces.[2] Approaching the questions of elections with an open mind, Ripon was anxious that a suitable system should be evolved through experiment, and should not be an imposition. Since the Indian public opinion on this subject had not crystallized into any definite demand, the quest for a suitable electoral system, now brought into focus the question of Muslim representation.

Sir Syed's Viewpoint

It was left to Sir Syed, who as an Additional Member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council gave expression to Muslim aspirations in the context of the Bill. Voting "in favour of the passing of this bill, he fervently endorsed the principles of the bill," and his "few observations on some features" were almost a restatement of the Resolution of 18 May, 1882. Sir Syed said:

> My Lord, I am one of those who believe that the success of the local self-government will, in a great measure depend upon the amount of independent power to be conferred upon the local boards and district boards.[3]

Sir Syed's conviction that, "the greater the powers conferred upon these bodies, the greater will be the cordiality, earnestness and industry with which the work will be performed by the members"[4] supported the Resolution; in which the Governor General in Council had already asserted that "previous attempts at local self-government have been too often overridden and practically crushed by direct, though well-meant official interference."[5] However, it would be assuming too much that Sir

1. *Ibid.*
2. Primrose to Lyall, 15 August 1882, File 63-D, *LYC*, IOL.
3. Speech of the Hon'ble Sayyad Ahmad Khan, 12 January 1883, 'Central Provinces Local Self-Government Bill', *Legislative Council Proceedings*, *Government of India*, Vol. 22, 1883. IOL.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Resolution of 18 May 1882, *Parliamentary Papers.*

Syed's ideas on the local self-government were conditioned by the Resolution. He rejoiced "to see the inauguration of...those principles of self-help and self-government which have given birth to representative institutions in England".[1] It cannot be gainsaid that he had been the proponent of self-help and of representative institutions for the last so many years. In this case, his sentiment was reinforced by the knowledge that the Governor General in Council had prescribed:

> "that the only reasonable plan open to the Government is to induce the people themselves to undertake, as far as may be, the management of their own affairs, and to develop . . . a capacity of self-help in respect of all matters that have not for imperial reasons, to be retained in the hands of Government."[2]

Ripon's liberal spirit had struck a responsive chord in Sir Syed. The Government was aware of the divergent elements of population, and in order to protect the rights of different classes and interests had already provided for nominations along with the elections. The Government had reserved the power of nominating one third of the members of the local bodies in the Central Provinces.[3] This clause provided a constitutional mechanism for the protection of minorities and backward classes. But this provision was not initiated by Sir Syed. It was in support of this system, that he made his famous speech, which without sufficient justification is often held up as the starting point of Muslim separatism. In fact, he made no demands, but only emphasized well-known facts of communal conflict as a rationale for the system of nominations. He said:

> I am convinced that no part of India has yet arrived at that stage when the system of representation can be adopted, in its fullest scope, even in local affairs . . . But in borrowing from England the system of representative institutions, it is of the greatest importance to remember the socio-political matters in which India is distinguishable from England. . . . India, a continent in itself, is inhabited by vast populations of different races and different creeds . . . the system of caste is still dominant and powerful . . . One section may be numerically larger than the other, and the standard of enlightenment which one section of the community has reached may be far higher than attained by the rest of the population. One community may be fully alive to

1. Speech of the Hon'ble Sayyad Ahmad Khan, 12 January 1883, *Legislative Council Proceedings, Government of India, 1883.*

2. Resolution of 18 May 1882, *Parliamentary Papers.*

3. Clause (c) of section 5, and section 6 of the Bill. Sir Syed referred to these clauses in his speech.

> the importance of securing representation on the local boards and district councils, whilst the other may be wholly indifferent to such matters. Under these circumstances, it is hardly possible to deny that the introduction of representative institutions in India will be attended with considerable difficulty and socio-political risks.... The system of representation by election means the representation of the views and interests of the majority of the population, and, in countries where the population is composed of one race and one creed, it is no doubt the best system, that can be adopted. But, my Lord, in a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourish where there is no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education in its modern sense has not made an equal or proportionate progress among all the sections of the population, I am convinced that the introduction of principles of election, pure and simple, for district councils would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations....The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community, ... *Government, in reserving to itself the power of appointing one-third of the members of the local boards and district councils, is adopting the only measures which can be adopted to guarantee the success of local self-government,* by securing and maintaining that due and just balance in the representation of the various sections of the Indian population which the system of election, pure and simple would fail to achieve.[1]

Sir Syed's speech was a vindication of Government policy rather than its criticism. Neither had he suggested any amendment nor any improvement on the Bill. There was nothing original in his reservations about the scope of the elective system for Ripon had already decided to leave the initiative in this field to the Local Governments.[2] Since the Government did not desire to pre-judge the patterns of elective system for each province, it was willing to make trials in 'a variety of plans':

> The simple vote, the cumulative, election by wards, election by the whole town or tract, suffrage of more or less extended qualification, selection by castes or occupations—these and other methods, unthought of in Europe, may be found suitable to India: and after a time it will probably be possible to say what forms suit best the local peculiarities and idiosyncracies of the different populations.[3]

1. "Speech of the Hon'ble Sayyad Ahmad Khan, 12 January 1883." Italics by the author.
2. "Resolution of 18 May 1882.
3. *Ibid.*

In view of imperial interests and local conditions, the Government had not provided for the elective system pure and simple or anything near it. In fact it was farthest from the imagination of British policy makers at home and in India. Sir Syed's reference to the pure and simple election was nothing but hypothetical, and was employed to reinforce his argument in favour of the system of nominations provided for in the bill. Since the nominations had already earned his "unqualified satisfaction",[1] perhaps he had some other reason also to endorse this system. This was obvious from his anxious plea that the nominations should also be used to protect the "representation of the landed interest"[2] of his own province. While the landed interests of C. P. were to be represented by *Mukaddams*, he asked for somewhat different treatment for the landed gentry of the N. W. Provinces. This did not amount to any departure from the bill.

Hali has perpetuated the myth that Sir Syed persuaded Ripon to exclude Northern India from the operation of the elective system, and instead, convinced him of the necessity of empowering the Government to nominate one third members to the local bodies.[3] In this case, Hali's admiration for his hero had exceeded the limits of objectivity. In a similar vein a recent writer observes that Ripon who wanted to fill "all seats on the local bodies by election, saw Syed Ahmad's point and agreed to amendment of the bill.... Had the bill been passed as originally presented, the Muslims would not have had much of a chance to play their rightful part in local self-Government...."[4] Such naive assumptions are far removed from facts. Unmistakably Sir Syed followed Ripon's lead who had already recommended the draft of C. P. Local Self-Government to Lyall, the Lt. Governor of N. W. Provinces, and invited his attention to the clauses pertaining to Government control.[5] In reply, Lyall pointed out that the "circumstances of these Provinces differ very much from those of C. P."[6] Similarly Bengal Government had also recommended, "as a general rule appointments to Local Boards must be by nomination...by the Government in the first instance".[7] Obviously Sir Syed was emphasizing the

1. "Speech of the Hon'ble Sayyad Ahmad Khan."
2. *Ibid.*
3. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
4. Hadi Hussain, *Syed Ahmad Khan: Pioneer of Muslim Resurgence*, Lahore, 1970, pp. 200-201.
5. Primrose to Lyall, 15 August 1882, File 63, D, *LYC*, IOL,
6. Lyall to Primrose, 22 August 1882, *Ibid.*
7. Colman Macaulay, officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Finance and Commerce (No. 99), 8 April 1882, *Parliamentary Papers, 1883*, Vol. LI, IOL.

same point by advocating the nomination of men of 'social standing and respectibility."[1] In no way were his ideas about nominations at variance with the Government. But then, why did he take so much pains to denounce the election pure and simple, especially when he knew there was not the remotest possibility under the bill, or even in the immediate future. His forceful speech was designed to underscore the system of nominations, and as a means of assurance that the N. W. Provinces would not be excluded from the operation of such a system. Though plausible, this explanation does not take cognizance of the larger issue of the domination of the majority over the minority raised by him. Sir Syed's emphasis on this point seemingly irrelevant and unwarranted by the provisions of the bill, was nevertheless necessary to highlight the problems of Muslim minority, so that the system of nominations could obtain a permanent sanction in the Statute Book. It was a pointer for the future.

Ripon was fully aware of the necessity of protection for those minorities who could not stand on their own even though he did not contemplate a comprehensive provision for minorities on an all-India basis. Accordingly, he advised Lyall to make use of the nominations of the Honorary Magistrates to the Local Boards, for a larger purpose:

> . . . to secure the representation in the local bodies of minorities who would not be able by any other process to obtain presence on Committees or Boards of persons who look after their special interests —I am thinking particularly of the case of Mahomedans in Municipal towns, and to a certain extent also in some cases of small European communities. It might easily happen that there might be no Mahomedan in a particular town who was fit to be an Hon. Magistrate and yet whose interests ought to be represented on the Committees.[2]

Keeping this aim in view, Ripon had already left "a very large discretion to the Local Governments as to the manner in which those principles should be applied in different parts of the country."[3] No rules were laid down for making nominations to the local bodies. Ripon was conscious of those differences which divided the people of India, and militated against the adoption of a uniform policy in relation to various communities. He had already brought this fact to the notice of Gladstone:

> India is so vast a land, containing so many different races, and presenting such varieties of civilization and advancement, that it would

1. "Speech of the Hon'ble Sayyad Ahmad Khan, 12 January, 1883."
2. Ripon to Lyall, 1 March 1883, File No. 40, *LYC.*
3. Ripon to Gladstone, 6 October 1882, *Correspondence in England*, *RC.*

> be the height of folly to attempt to prescribe a uniform system for the whole of the peninsula; there are districts in which no kind of self-government is at present possible, but there are many others in which it may be safely and wisely conceded in a large measure.[1]

Later in his speech in the Council, Sir Syed gave expression to similar though elaborate views about the necessity of protecting the rights of the minorities. If his political inferences confirmed the premises of Government policy, it did not imply that his speech was an inspired affair. Syed could not have known the highly confidential correspondence between the Governor General and the Prime Minister of England, or learnt the contents of the secret correspondence on this subject which passed between the Governor General and the Local governments. To establish a causative relationship on the basis of similarity of views would be a venture into the domain of smart deductions unsupported by facts. Since the system of nominations touched Muslim rights he gave it top priority in his political consideration. The tyranny of majority over the minority was a distant prospect and would become a political reality when democracy became operative in India. But his apprehension of such a contingency was a piece of loud thinking and "sounded a note of warning"[2] about the political future of India. Herein Sir Syed displayed a prescience that 'was almost prophetic.'[3] Significantly, he refrained from styling the Hindus and Muslims as separate nations, but described the Indian people in terms of professions, castes, creeds, and sections of population but not as nationalities. Throughout his speech, he neither mentioned the Hindus nor designated the Muslims by name, but instead styled them as majority and minority in the democratic parlance. The choice of political phraseology was deliberate. It would seem, though he believed in separate Muslim and Hindu nations, he refrained from styling them as such in the Viceroy's Council for the sake of continued Hindu-Muslim amity.

To an extent Sir Syed's advocacy of the system of nominations formulated Muslim thinking on this subject. But a recent writer feels that it cannot be safely inferred that he favoured "national elections", or separate electorates, according to which Muslims would elect Moslems and Hindus would elect Hindu representative".[4] The facts as stated above fully warrant such an interpretation. Sir Syed did not even refer

1. *Ibid.*
2. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, Lahore 1967, p. 10.
3. H. K. Sherwani, *op. cit.*, p. 233.
4. Hafeez Malik, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-22.

to the system of separate election, and used all his force of eloquence and argument to vindicate the policy of nominations as envisaged by the Government. This system was designed to provide protection to minorities within the constitutional framework of one country, and not two separate nations. Some scholars have extolled it as "one of the best remembered speeches,"[1] and magnified its importance "for its influence on the course of events and on subsequent political thought". These opinions are largely valid. But this speech is often torn out of its political context in the legislative proceedings and only the suitable portion excerpted in isolation to present it as a manifesto of Muslim separatism. Had Sir Syed expounded Muslim separatism, he would not have taken pains to affirm a fortnight later in his speech on 27 January 1883, the need for Hindu-Muslim accord. He stressed that except for the difference about the concept of God, "the Hindus and Muslims belong to one community (*qaum*) as children of the soil and not two."[2] Now he was again pleading for a 'union of hearts'[3] and was grieved "at the sight of those who do not understand this basic point and inculcate views which would ultimately lead to a permanent cleavage between two sections of the Indian community."[4] Speaking before Muslim and Hindu audience during his tour of the Punjab in 1884 he gave expression to similar feelings.[5] How could he strike two discordant notes, one of Muslim separatism in the Legislative Council, and the other of Hindu-Muslim unity in the public. Only one of these arguments could be true, unless some harmony could be established between these apparently contradictory attitudes. Against this background his speeches in Patna and the Punjab cannot be glossed over as 'valedictory addresses of goodwill mission rather than hard political thinking. . .consistent with the rest of his writings or his well-known point of view."[6] If these speeches are explained away as platitudes played up to the gallery it would expose Sir Syed to charges of either hypocrisy or political chicanery which were never his failings. Often his Punjab speeches have been underrated to highlight unduly the importance of his speech on the C. P. Local Self-Government bill. Had he postulated separate Muslim representation, the Hindu orthodox bodies like the Arya Samaj[7] and other Hindu associations of the Punjab would not have given him glowing

1. *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 522.
2. H. K., Sherwani, *op. cit*, pp. 233-34.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Siraj-ud-Din Ahmad, *Majmu'a*, see pp. 118, 132, 145, 153, 167 169-71 and 204.
6. *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. II, Part II, pp. 522-23.
7. Hali, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

ovations in various places and lauded his services to the Indian cause in the Legislative Council. Even for his fervent defence of the Ilbert Bill,[1] Hindus could not have condoned or ignored his verdict on separatism. But it would be equally unfair to suggest that for the sake of Hindu goodwill he would have stood silent and not articulated Muslim apprehensions of an elective system. The plain fact of the matter was that, "He was simply stating the facts of Indian situation and not trying to win favours at the expense of the larger community".[2] In defending the system of nominations, he emphasized the desirability of evolving a constitutional mechanism for the defence of Muslim rights in the event of the application of representative institutions on a larger scale. Those who insist on perceiving the demand of separate Muslim representation in his speech overlook the fact that such an object could never be achieved by entrusting the power and discretion to the Government for nominating Muslim representatives. Since the Government was under no constitutional or political obligation own to obtain any prior Muslim sanction it could install with impunity its own stooges as Muslim representatives, and direct Muslim policies without reference to Muslim nation. Since the system of nominations was not well-defined, and made no provision for making the nominations to correspond with the ratio of Muslim population in specific areas, it was least useful as a guarantee of Muslim rights. Under the circumstances, the system advocated by Sir Syed could have been beneficial as a temporary expedient, but to look upon his speech as a blue-print of separate Muslim representation, as is now customary, is to over-simplify facts.

Central National Mahomedan Association's Demand

The demand for separate Muslim representation was unequivocally formulated, two months later, by Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf in his speech on the Local Self-Government in the Bengal Legislative Council. There is not a shred of evidence to suggest that he drew his inspiration from Sir Syed. On the contrary, he was a member of the Central National Mahomedan Association and reflected the political line of Syed Ameer Ali. Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf commended the reform of local self-government, but differed from those who tended to interpret the Resolution of 18 May 1882 to imply "that the people were generally unprepared for the duties of Self-Government".[3] "That the country was prepared for the measure,

1. *Ibid.*
2. Waheed-uz-Zaman, *Towards Pakistan*, Lahore, 1964, p. 7.
3. Speech of Hon'ble Muhammad Yusuf, 3 March 1883, *Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. 9, 1883, IOL.

preceded the idea of introducing this measure,"[1] was his argument. He affirmed that the political training of the people could only begin with the transfer of responsibility to them. But what should be the position of Muslims in the new political set up envisaged in the local self-government. Unlike Sir Syed, he was not content to make a general reference to the Hindu-Muslim incompatibility on religious, political, and cultural grounds, but invited the attention of Government to the necessity of having some constitutional provisions to ensure separate Muslim representation. He said:

> There is another point to which I must draw the attention of the Council, and that is a matter in which the poor and unlucky Mahomedan Community is more closely concerned than their powerful and more fortunate brethren, the Hindus . . . I mean the question regarding the representation of the minority.[2]

Since in most parts of the country, feelings of hostility prevailed between the Hindus and Muslims, the rights of Muslim minority could be best secured through separate representation which would be also beneficial for Hindus in those areas, where they formed a minority. He argued:

> The Council will be pleased to remember that though in most places the Mahomedan population forms a minority as compared with the larger bodies of Hindus, still in many places they form a large proportion of the population. Or it may be that in some places, though fewer, the case is the reverse, and the Hindus form a minority. In such cases, when there is party spirit and angry feeling between the two classes of people, it is necessary to reserve power for the representation of the minority. The Bill proposes to provide for this by nomination, but it would be an advantage, and a more fit recognition of the claims of the Mahomedan population if provision could be made in the Bill for the election of Mahomedans by reserving a certain number of memberships for that community.[3]

He emphasized that the matter was 'of such manifest importance' that it merited a decision after 'mature consideration' by the Council. Not only he suggested amendment of the Bill on the basis of separate representation, but also advocated the enfranchisement of women".[4] This was the first voice for the political rights of Muslim women.

Separate Muslim representation was formulated as a twofold demand. Firstly, he tried to correlate representation with the geographical distribu-

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

tion of Muslim population, so that Muslims commanding majority in certain areas could benefit from their numerical superiority; and Muslim minority in the Hindu majority areas could have their rights protected through a constitutional sanction. Secondly, he preferred elections to nominations, which would free Muslims from official sufferance, and enable them to discover their political destiny through their own strength and organization. In contrast with Sir Syed's aristocratic views he stood distinguished for his democratic opinion. As long as the principle of separate Muslim representation was embodied in the Bill, he was willing to accept various proposals, but rejected the idea that the Government should retain the power of nomination as an alternative to separate Muslim electorate. Surely, his speech was a landmark in the history of Muslim separatism. By no means an individual pronouncement, like Sir Syed's, his speech reflected the political thinking fostered by Syed Ameer Ali and represented a demand backed up by a countrywide political Association.

Separate Muslim representation in the local bodies, as a definite political demand emerged largely from Ameer Ali's movement for securing a constitutional recognition for Muslim rights in the public service. Now, Ameer Ali put forward a demand for Muslim share in quantitative terms, and asked that 'in Bengal at least one third of the State employments should be reserved for the Mahomedans.'[1] This demand was based on comparative strength of Hindu and Muslim populations in Bengal, which according to the census of 1881 stood in relationship of two to one.[2] In making this demand, he claimed to represent 'the feelings and hopes of our community[3], formulated by the Central National Mahomedan Association and its branches all over the country.[4] By 1884, the question of Muslim representation had assumed greater importance in view of the 'necessity of having separate school boards and inspecting officers for Mahomedan schools. Otherwise the Mahomedans will be subjected to a good deal of petty oppressions; and it will be impossible for them to get any funds from the Local Boards for Mahomedan education.'[5] Highlighting this problem, the *Mahomedan Observer*, mouthpiece of the Central National Mahomedan Association, urged an adequate Muslim representation in the local bodies:

> Matters which peculiarly affect Mohamedans and touch their interests in a special way can scarcely be expected to receive their due share of attention by any other than a Mahomedan Commissioner.[6]

1. The Hon'ble Ameer Ali to H. W. Primrose, 10 March 1884, *Correspondence in India, RC, 1884.*
2. *Report of the Administration of Bengal 1882-83*, Calcutta, 1884, p. 103.
3. The Hon'ble Ameer Ali to H. W. Primrose, 10 March 1884. *Correspondence in India, R.C. 1884.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Ameer Ali to H. W. Primrose, 12 March 1884, *Ibid.*
6. *Mahomedan Observer*, Calcutta, 3 December 1884, cited in *The Voice of India, 1885*, IOL.

Fully alive to the gravity of this problem, Ameer Ali immediately invited the attention of the Government of Bengal, to 'the position of the Mahomedans of Bengal'[1] in relation to the new Municipal Bill. He argued, unless the property qualifications were lowered, the Muslim majorities in certain areas would be rendered ineffective, and they would fail to 'obtain a sufficient representation' and even in places where they formed 'an influential minority' they would not be able to stand on their own against the Hindu majority, as happened in the elections of the Calcutta Municipality:

> The Mahommedans in Calcutta form one-third of the entire-population, but out of 48 elected members only 5 are Mahomedans.[2]

He deplored that the Hindu-Muslim relations were far from harmonious, and in many places where the elective system had been applied, the local bodies consisted entirely of Hindus who were 'not always regardful of Mahomedan interests.' On behalf of the Central National Mahomedan Association he put forward two proposals to the Government 'for the proper safeguarding of the interests of the Mahomedans :

> The Committee would suggest, in the first place, a lowering of the property qualifications, so as to enable a larger number of the Mahomedans to have votes; and secondly, that a provision should be made empowering the Local Governments to direct the minority to elect their own representative where the state of feeling or other considerations may render such a step expedient and desirable.[3]

He warned the Government that if these 'proposals are not adopted...the Mahomedans in many parts of Bengal will be totally unrepresented on the Municipal Boards.'[4] Significantly, Ameer Ali preferred elections to nominations which were favoured by Sir Syed. Unlike Sir Syed, who had tabooed democratic system without any alternative electoral scheme, Ameer Ali sought to preserve Muslim rights through an electoral system moulded on communal lines. In this manner, he evolved a constructive compromise between the requirements of an elective system and the Muslim demand for separate representation. Undoubtedly, he was the first to enunciate the principle of separate Muslim electorate which was later adopted as a goal by the All India Muslim League. Ameer Ali's proposals were essentially democratic, progressive and practicable. The *Mahomedan Observer* supported these proposals and pointed out that, if suitable measures were not taken, "to ensure a fair representation of the Mahomedan community in the Municipal Boards, the Hindu element will always exercise a pre-

1. Ameer Ali to C. P. L. Macaulay, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (n.d.) February 1884. This letter forms an enclosure of Ameer Ali's letter of 12 March 1884 referred to above.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

ponderating influence to the almost entire exclusion of the Mahomedan element."[1] Highlighting Muslim failure in the municipal elections, the paper pleaded for the inclusion of "some specific provisions' in the new Municipal Bill to secure 'a fair representation of their interests in all Municipal bodies."[2] Muslim public opinion in Bengal began to look upon separate electorates as the only remedy for their educational backwardness and economic deprivation.

While Ameer Ali was pressing the Government of India and the Government of Bengal to incorporate provisions for separate Muslim representation in the future enactment regarding the local bodies; Muslims of other provinces were also busy making efforts in the same direction. Thus the demand for separate Muslim representation was first tested in the laboratory of local self-government which provided opportunities, even though limited, for its experimentation and working at the grass-roots level. This brought home to them the utter inadequacy of nominations in comparison with elections held on the basis of Muslim electorate. Soon they began to appreciate, that constitutional safeguards in the form of separate electorate could alone give protection to their national entity. Countrywide Muslim failures in the municipal elections brought the demand for separate representation into sharper national focuss, and almost all the Muslim Associations and newspapers began to propagate it as a political goal. Traumatic setback in their first experiment with the joint electorates caused Muslim anguish and frustration. This became for them a means of political self-discovery. To their chagrin they had found that despite all professions of a common nationhood, Hindus had invariably elbowed them out in every constituency, and in practice joint electorates and Indian nationalism were nothing but a camouflage for Hindu communalism. A member of the Surat branch of the Central National Mahomedan Association urged Ameer Ali to "to take up this matter and represent it to Government."[3] Anonymous Surati Muslim, in his letter, commented that the existing system of local self-government "is worked here for the benefit of one community only."[4] He substantiated his contention with the help of comparative figures of Hindu and Muslim population in the sixteen cities of the Bombay Presidency. He affirmed that in most of the towns Muslims were 'very meagrely and disproportionately represented in the Municipal Boards", but in other towns they were excluded altogether. The population of Ahmadabad city comprised 86,544 Hindus, 27,124 Muslims, and 13,953 Parsees, for which 9 Hindus and 3 Parsees were elected as members, but Muslims were unrepresented altogether. Similarly in Surat, Hindus claimed 10 elected

1. *Mahomedan Observer*, 15 March 1884, cited in *The Voice of India*, 1884.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Ameer Ali to H. W. Primrose, 12 April 1884, *Correspondence in India, RC.*
4. *Ibid.*

members for a population of 76,264, but 21,430 Muslims had only one member to represent them while Parsees had one member for a population of 12,150. There was no relevance between Muslim population and its representation in the local bodies. Before the elections, a meeting of the leading Hindus, Muslims and Parsees was held "to decide what sort of election system should be carried out". Hindus stood for elections by wards, but Muslims and Parsees advocated election by communities. The Hindus being in majority shot down the proposal for communal representation. Later, the Government of Bombay accepted the Hindu demand, and "thus by such means the Government has been the means of getting one community over-ruled by the other..."[1] Ameer Ali brought this letter to the notice of the Viceroy, and expounded :

> There are several methods by which a fair representation of the Mahomedans may be secured, one of them being the method suggested by the Central National Mahomedan Association to the Bengal Government. I will tell you frankly I am extremely anxious on this subject, for I fear very much, if no step is taken to guarantee a fair representation for the Mussulman element, it will be a fruitful source of trouble and difficulty in the future... What I want is that my people should not, as they are apt from sheer force of majority to be, excluded from representation. With two different communities, utterly alien to each other in creed and language, customs and usage, subsisting side by side, you cannot expect one uniform system will work without any friction at all.[2]

This was no solitary complaint. In Ahmadabad, 'The Muslim Community also failed.'[3] The Muslims of Sylhet grumbled at 'the unsatisfactory result of the election, and were naturally desirous that something might be done to secure a representative for themselves in the Municipal Council.'[4] *Rafiq-i-Hind* complained that the nominations were being misused "to secure the prevalence of the Hindu element in every Committee," and pointed out that the nominations were nothing more than a constitutional device "to equalise the two elements of a Committee."[5] In Etawah, fourteen out of the fifteen elected members were Hindus.[6] In the Punjab, the working of local bodies was not satisfactory in some places "owing to the want of good feeling between Hindus and Mussalmans."[7]

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. J. Nugent, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, to the Secretary to the Government of India, 6 July, 1883, Proceeding No. 35, *Home Proceedings Municipal 1883*, Vol. 2044, IOL.
4. *The Mahomedan Observer*, Calcutta, 3 December 1883, cited in *The Voice of India*, 1883, IOL.
5. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 21 June 1884, cited in *NWPNR, 1884*, IOL.
6. *Najm-ul-Akhbar*, Etawah, 8 September 1884, cited in *Ibid.*
7. *Akhbar-i-A'am*, Lahore, 19 November 1884, cited in *Ibid.*

But in Aligarh, Hindu-Muslim friction took the shape of a disputation about the composition of Hindu and Muslim societies. Maulvi Muhammad Ismail Khan of Dataoli, contended that Hindu population of Aligarh had been magnified by the inclusion in the Hindu fold "of such lower classes of people as shoe-makers, *kahars*, *kanjars*, sweepers etc".[1] In this manner, Hindu population was bolstered up to be double the size of Muslim population. Though practically excluded from Hindu society, if the Untouchables were not lumped together with Hindus in the census count, then Hindus and Muslims would be equally balanced in Aligarh and would also be equally represented in the local boards. The Punjab government did not consider it politic to introduce elections in Delhi in view of the 'state of feeling between the Muhammadans and Hindus of the city'.[2] In Multan, despite Muslim majority, 15 Hindus were elected in comparison with 8 Muslims, and Hindus owed their success to the unabashed purchase of votes from poor Muslim voters. In Lahore, the elections were contested, and "as a rule the Muhammadan community voted only for candidates of their own faith." In Wazirabad, the Hindus and Muslims after "strong party feeling"[3] agreed to the formula of having equal number of members for both the communities.[4] In Gujrat, as the sequel of a quarrel, the Hindus and Muslims preferred to vote for their own co-religionists.[5] Hindu-Muslim friction persisted in the Punjab even after the elections of 1884. The Lt. Governor to frame a set of rules, "following considerable agitation at Amristar" in 1888. According to the new rules, out of 18 members of Amritsar municipality, 10 were to be Hindus and 8 were to be Muslims who would be elected through a joint electorate.[6] But the election of a Hindu and a Muslim vice-president was to be based on communal vote of the members. In 1886, the Government had already made reservation of seats for "shopkeepers, traders and house-owners"[7] and thereby accorded recognition to representation by classes and interests. In 1891, a rule was prescribed for Lahore, on the lines of "one already in force at Amritsar, whereby Hindus and Muhammadans are allowed to elect their own representatives."[8] By 1886, separate electorates were being

1. *Oudh Akhbar*, Lucknow, May 1884, cited in *Ibid.* The paper carried a letter of Maulvi Muhammad Ismail. *Kahars* means palanquin-bearers and *kanjars* means green grocers.

2. C. C. Tupper, Officiating Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, to A. Mackenzie, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, 29 September 1884, No. 31-B, *Home Proceedings, Municipal, Punjab.* PRO.

3. *Ibid.*

4. H. Tinker, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

5. *Shafiq-i-Hind*, 3 January 1885, cited in *NWPNR, 1885*, IOL.

6. Nos. 2-3, Part A, Proceedings for April 1890. "Review of the Municipal Administration of the Punjab for the year 1888-89." *Home Proceedings, Municipal.* PRO.

7. H. Tinker, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

8. *Report on Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1890-91.* PUL.

extensively employed in most parts of the Punjab, and in other provinces as well. Separate electorates though not conceded in theory, had evolved as a constitutional practice in various parts of the country. In fact separate electorate had been the result of positive Muslim demand and persistent effort rather than an act of official indulgence. Separate representation was first inscribed in the rule books of the local bodies before its application to the Legislative Councils which followed as its natural consequence. Thus a half-way house had been reached and an intermediary stage covered on their road to separatism.

Representation in Councils

The public debate on the reform of the Legislative Councils brought the question of Muslim representation into the focus of higher politics. During the last decade (1880-1890), political opinion had changed both in India and England as there had grown up steadily a body of men who stood for the reform of Indian Councils. The existing Councils were considered to be obsolete and unrepresentative. In December 1881, Ripon took the lead in proposing the reform of the Supreme and Provincial Councils, and envisaged the addition of elected members to them. The members were to be elected by municipal bodies of larger towns and Presidency Corporations.[1] The Councils were to be raised on the infrastructure of the local bodies. But Hartington was not so enthusiastic about the proposal, and advised Ripon to 'wait and see' the result of his extensive experiment in local self-government. Hartington felt that the introduction of elected Indian element to the Councils 'would be an absolutely novel and alien'[2] idea even for the Indian people. He would have preferred nominations to secure the practical benefits of the elective principle. Later, Kimberley informed Ripon that he was 'decidedly adverse to the proposed reform.'[3] In view of the opposition of the Home Government, Ripon shelved his scheme.

In the meantime, the Hindu demand for the reform of Councils had enlarged the issue considerably. In 1884, the Indian Association of Calcutta, in its address to Dufferin urged the reconstitution of provincial Councils which allowed 'little room for the successful expression of popular opinion.'[4] Surendranath Banerjea pleaded that 'the present legislatures have outgrown the times,' and the demand for their reform 'deeply stirred the educated community throughout India'.[5] He urged common political

1. Hartington to Ripon, 26 December 1882, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, RC, 1882*, BM.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Kimberley to Ripon, 14 February 1883, *Ibid.*

4. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress*, Calcutta, p. 104, IOL.

5. *The Bengalee*, 7 November 1885, IOL.

action to achieve the goal of reform. *The Hindoo Patriot* asserted that 'time had come' when elected Indian members should "give expression to the thoughts and feelings"[1] of the people of India. Subramania Iyer criticized the Councils, which were 'limited to registering the decrees of the executive government and stamp it with legislative sanction.'[2] The first Indian National Congress pleaded for the enlargement of Councils by admission of 'a considerable proportion of elected members.'[3] Since the Congress did not prescribe any proportion of elected members, and did not define the electorate, its Resolution was more in the nature of a general wish than a specific demand. However, the Second Congress worked out a detailed demand. It advocated the enlargement of the provincial Councils in which not less than 1/3 members should be elected by the local bodies, Chambers of Commerce, and Universities. Franchise could be worked out separately for each province, but "care must be taken that all sections of the community, and all great interests are adequately represented."[4] It seems that, at that stage, the Congress had not adopted a hard line against communal representation. Surendranath Banerjea in his address to the Muslims of Calcutta advocated that whatever the scheme of representation adopted by the Government, "the interests of all classes of community, Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsees, Sikhs, Eurasians, of all races and of all creeds should be adequately cared for."[5] But, how best Muslim interests were to be looked after ? The Congress and the Muslims had different answers.

While the Congress was pressing hard for reform, Muslims did not support the Congress move. It would be illogical to infer that Muslim opposition to the Congress also implied their opposition to the reform of the Councils. Sir Syed had pleaded, as early as 1875, that the Indians deserved it as a matter of right to be the members of the Parliament. However, he pointed out that any theoretical acceptance of this right did not necessarily imply that the conditions in India were also favourable for its immediate fulfilment. But still he favoured the presence of some Indians in the Parliament.[6] In 1880, Ameer Ali criticised the un-representative character of the Councils, and regretted that "the Rajas and Nawabs who have hitherto adorned the viceregal Council" had failed to render

1. *The Hindoo Patriot*, 9 February 1885, IOL.
2. *Report of the First Indian National Congress*, p. 26.
3. Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom*, Madras, 1915, p. 13.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Reports of the Second Indian National Congress*, p. 99, IOL.
6. *AIG*, 16 July 1875, IOL.

any service either to the people or to the Government. He slated the system of nominations by which the titled nonentities could be elevated to the Council. He pleaded for the enlargement of the Supreme Council by the addition of at least four members who 'should be judged by the standard of their usefulness and ability, and not by the titles attached to their names."[1] *Rahbar-i-Hind*, pointed out that the Indian element in the Councils was too insignificant and proposed that at least there should be one member for every 10 million people.The paper also emphasized that 'every class of community should be adequately represented in the Viceroy's Legislative Council.'[2] *Aftab-i-Punjab* advised the Indian people to agitate for admission to the British Parliament.[3]

Though Muslims had made a common cause with the Hindus for the reform of the Councils, Hindus reacted sharply against nomination of Muslim members to the Councils and thus confirmed Muslim apprehensions of domination by Hindu majority. Hindu press could not tolerate even the nomination of Muslims of proven merit to the Supreme Council, and criticized Syed Ameer Husain's appointment in very strong terms.[4] Hindu papers of Calcutta were so virulent in their 'strictures'[5] that the Muslims were perturbed, and a Hindu paper had to advise restraint to the detractors of Syed Ameer Husain, the Secretary of the Central National Mahomedan Association. In the meantime, Muslims of the Punjab were urging the establishment of a Legislative Council in the Punjab. *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* pleaded for a Legislative Council in the Punjab on the lines of the one recently established in N. W. Provinces. The paper argued that if N. W. Provinces had a larger population than the Punjab, the latter had a larger area than the former province.[6] In a similar vein, *Rafiq-i-Hind* remarked that there was a greater need of setting up a Legislative Council in the Punjab as only one or two members of the Supreme Council were "acquainted with the wants and conditions of the Punjabis."[7]

Though no less concerned about the enlargement of the Councils, Muslims were more anxious about their separate representation in

1. Ameer Ali, 'Some Indian Suggestions for India', *The Nineteenth Century*, June 1880.
2. *Rahbar-i-Hind*, Jullunder, 31 December 1883, cited in *NWPNR 1884*, IOL.
3. *Aftab-i-Punjab*, Jullunder, 11 February 1884, *Ibid.*
4. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 26 June 1886, cited in *NWPNR, 1886*, IOL.
5. *Hindustan*, Kalakankar, 23 July 1886, cited in *Ibid.*
6. *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, 13 December, 1880, PUL.
7. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 24 July 1886, cited in *NWPNR, 1886.*

them.[1] In their political strategy, separate representation took precedence over reform of the Councils *per se*. And, if Muslims disassociated themselves from the Congress demand, it was for the simple reason that the Congress was not even prepared to fix the number of Muslim representatives under joint electorates much less under any scheme of separate representation. As the years passed, Hindu and Muslim viewpoints on this issue hardened into a confrontation between them.

In view of the Congress agitation, Dufferin re-opened the question of reform with the Home Government. He was willing to accept "a large admixture of elected natives"[2] to the Councils. Fearing that if such a reform was delayed, the moderate Indian leaders would lose ground to the extremist politicians, he recommended 'an experiment of liberalizing if not supreme, at least the subordinate legislative Councils.' Dufferin also suggested that the reforms of provincial Councils 'would shift the gravity of Indian political activity from the self-constituted associations to really responsible classes.'[3] Though Dufferin desired to undermine the Indian demand for reform by setting up nominal Councils, his proposal aroused little enthusiasm in Whitehall. In the meantime, the reform slogan had caught on with the English and Hindu capitalists. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce supported the reform of Councils in order to have a free discussion of the budget.[4] The European and Anglo-Indian Defence Associations urged the Government to permit discussion of the budget, which they thought would be also beneficial for the Government and enable it to win public support for its budget proposals.[5] The Bombay Chamber of Commerce also pleaded for the discussion of the budget by 'an enlightened body of public opinion.'[6] No Muslim ranked among these capitalists. Since it suited the economic interests of European, Hindu and Parsee bourgeoisie to have a say in the budget, they were more eager to use the reformed Councils as instruments of political pressure primarily for the abolition of Income Tax rather than for the repeal of Salt Tax which weighed heavily on millions of poor people. In 1888, Dufferin again presented his views in a Minute emphasizing the 'desirability of reconstituting the provincial Councils upon a broader basis.'[7] He also

1. Emphasis added.
2. Dufferin to Kimberley, 26 April 1886, *Kimberley Collection*, IOL.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Proceeding No. 31, *India Public Proceedings*, April 1888, IOL.
5. Proceeding No. 37, *Ibid.*
6. Proceeding No. 32, *Ibid.*
7. 'Dufferin's Minute', 20 September 1888, *Public Letters from India, 1888*, Vol. 9, p. 1189, IOL.

appointed a Committee of the members of the Council which inter alia emphasized the representation of important interests and classes.[1] Dufferin set forth "the chief elements of the problem," and pointed out that 250 million population of India was "composed of a large number of distinct nationalities, professing various religions, practicising diverse rites, speaking different languages, while many of them still further separated from one another by discordant prejudices, by conflicting social usages and even antagonistic material prejudices.'[2] There were 190 million Hindus and 50 million Muslims to whom could be added other nationalities like the Sikhs and Parsees. Since the Government was responsible 'for the safety and welfare' of not only Hindus and Muslims but also of Europeans and Indian Christians, any further scheme of reform would have to be tailored within the frame-work of British sovereignty which alone was the best guarantee of peace and harmony among these elements. He emphasized that the electoral system had its limitations in a country where out of a population of 200 million, only 4 or 5 per cent could read and write, and less than one per cent knew English and out of those only a few thousand could 'take an intelligent view' of local affairs; and those who could comprehend larger problems could be "counted rather by tens than by hundreds."[3] He argued that it would be impolitic to invest a few thousand Europeanised Indians with the right to represent various classes and interests. As the Indian National Congress was "the product only of that infinitesimal section," it could not be entrusted with the destiny of "millions of men, dozens of nationalities."[4] He pointed out that there were signs already 'as if the Mahomedans were rising in revolt against the ascendency which they imagine a rival and less virile race is desirous of obtaining over them." Dufferin affirmed that he was not 'taking a new departure, or starting upon fresh lines, and the application of the elective principle in a modified manner would only amount to "expanding, enlarging, multiplying, but no radically changing."[5] His proposals awaited the opinion of the Provincial Governments and the sanction of the Secretary of State. Later, the Chesney Committee recommended that in the first Division or House, the proportion of the Hindu and Muslim representatives should be fixed by the Govern-

1. *Ibid.* As this Committee was presided over by General Chesney, the Defence Member, it came to be known as Chesney Committee.

2. Dufferin to Godley, Earl of Kilbracken, 12 November 1888, *Kilbracken Collection*, IOL.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

ment. Though representation by classes and interests was recommended, religious minorities were excluded from this classification.[1] Cross, 'was not quite prepared"[2] for the reform of the Provincial Councils as adumbrated by Dufferin, and later advised Lansdowne to keep that scheme a secret.[3] But Dufferin's proposal was leaked out by *Amrita Bazar Patrika*,[4] causing a furore in the Government of India and the Anglo-Indian press. Thus a heated public controversy flared up on the question of reform.

Lansdowne, the new Viceroy, soft-pedalled the reform issue. In the light of the recommendations of Chesney Committee, he recommended the grant of some minor concessions, which he thought were in line with the demand 'by the more advanced party in this country.'[5] But Cross forbade Lansdowne to circulate Dufferin's Minute to the Provincial Governments, and explained, "my difficulty and Lord Salisbury's lies in the principle of election."[6] Another obstacle would be that Muslims would not like to be outvoted by the Hindus. Though rendering lip service to Muslim representation Dufferin, Lansdowne, Cross and Salisbury in fact used it as poly to deny the application of elective principle, otherwise they were as indifferent to separate Muslims representation as they were disinclined to any real reform. Given the goodwill, it was not impracticable to have evolved a constitutional formula guarantee ing separate Muslim representation and allowing Muslims to participate effectively in the Councils along with representatives of other Indian communities. But the elective principle in any form or for any class was an anathema for Tory policy makers. In rejecting it they were in no way swayed by feelings of partiality towards Muslims but only responded to their imperial goals in the subcontinent. Liberals fared no better despite their lip service to the elective principle. Under the pretence of Muslim sympathy the English rulers both at home and in India were equally anxious to beguile the unwary Muslim and to contain his nascent zeal for Muslim nationalism. The fiction of official patronage of Muslims did not accord with facts. Lansdowne was so careful that he refused to accept "an address of a very harmless nature," from the Muslims in order "to avoid anything sectional and to show no preference."[7]

1. *Public Letters from India*, 1888, p. 1175.
2. Cross to Lansdowne, 28 November 1888, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, LAC*, BM.
3. Cross to Lansdowne, 7 December 1888, *Ibid.*
4. Lansdowne to Cross, 1 January 1889, 28 April 1890, and 19 May 1890, *Ibid.*
5. Lansdowne to Cross, 24 December 1888, *Ibid.*
6. Cross to Lansdowne, 18 January 1889, *Ibid.*
7. Reay to Cross, 7 December 1888, *Cross Collection.*

This half hearted and non-committal policy evoked feelings of frustration among Muslims at large and was reflected in the characteristic reaction of "a Mahomedan of good position" from Amritsar who "publicly exhorted his co-religionists to join Hindus in expelling the English, for he said, when this have [sic] been done, it will be easy for us to subdue the Hindus and gain our former position of ascendency."[1] It would be unfair to assume Muslim passivity in the matter of reform.

The Congress did not seem to be decided on the question of minority representation in Councils. In 1888, Yule declared in his presidential address to the Fourth Congress :

> We want the Legislative Councils to be expanded to the extent that will admit of the representation of the various interests of the country, as far as that may be practicable. We want half of the councils to be elected, the other half to be appointed by Government, and we are willing that the right of veto should be with the executive.[2]

In the Fifth Congress in 1889, an amendment was proposed that the minority representation should be left to the Government, but it was lost.[3] Similarly, the proposal of a Muslim delegate pleading for a parity between the number of Hindu and Muslim members of the Councils was also rejected.[4] At last, the Congress resolved to assign a proportionate number of seats to the Muslims and other minorities within the ambit of joint electorate.[5] This arrangement though apparently fair, was designed to project the pro-Congress Muslim coterie as the real representatives of the Muslim population. Since the joint electorate would have nullified Muslim national identity, it was not acceptable to Muslims at large.

While the Tory Government had been dragging its feet, it were the English Radicals who forced the pace of legislation on the Councils Bill in the Parliament. Dufferin had already expressed his apprehension that if nothing was done, "the matter will be taken up by the English Radicals who will start a dangerous propagandism in this country."[6]

1. Col. P. P. Henderson, General Superintendent of Operations for Suppression of Thugee and Dacoity, Lahore, to D. E. McCkraken, Office of Superintendent of Operations for the Suppression of Thugee and Dacoity, 31 December 1888, *Correspondence in India, LAC,* BM.

2. I. N. Topa, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

3. Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

5. R. A. Zakria, *Muslims in India; a Political Analysis, 1885-1906*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis 1948, University of London, p. 144.

6. Dufferin to Godley, 4 December, 1888, *Kilbracken Collection.*

In December 1889, Charles Bradlaugh an English MP participated in the Congress session at Bombay, and on his return to England introduced a bill which embodied the main decisions of the Fifth Congress regarding the reform of Councils.

In 1888, Muslim viewpoint was defined by the Central National Mahomedan Association which rejected the Congress proposals and also warned against reliance on Government nominations of Muslim representatives. They affirmed :

> This Association is willing to concede that the system of nominations by which the Councils of the Government are recruited is not always happy in its results. But, bearing in mind how the Mohammedans are placed in this country, and how necessarily voting must take place by nationalities and creeds, the Association cannot believe that the introduction of representative institutions in the country in their entirety will be to the advantage of Mahommedans. The principle of representation must be carefully considered in connection with the rights of the minority...in the opinion of this Association, the policy of dependence on Government, without any self-exertion on our side is impolitic, unwise and suicidal."[1]

In order to chalk out a workable formula the Association proposed in 1888 a conference of Muslims from all over the country. But Muslims failed to evolve a consensus on this issue.

The Congress demand for reform was heightened after the introduction of Bradlaugh's bill. Muslim leaders and public opinion were not insensitive to the dangers of collusion between the Hindu Congress and the British Radicals. And, if it came to the question of having allies in the British Parliament, Muslims perforce had to seek help from those Conservative elements who for their own reasons had begun to apply dilatory tactics to undermine reform. Muslim alliance with the Conservative group was no less politic or morally suspect than the Congress coalition with the English Radicals. In order to muster support for his bill[2] Bradlaugh had already commissioned the Congress to send a petition to the Parliament in the form of a roll containing one million signatures. In this manner, he sought to impress the Parliament that the Congress enjoyed widespread popularity among Hindus and Muslims alike. But this campaign evoked a sharp Muslim reaction. *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* criticized the Congress for manoeuvring to impress the Parliament that fifty-million Muslims now stood by the Congress in its demand for reform.[3] *The*

1. *Triennial Report of the Committee of the Central National Mahomedan Association 1885-1888*, pp. 22-23.

2. *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, 3 March, 1890, PUL.

3. *Ibid.*

Aligarh Institute Gazette published an article by Beck who criticized Bradlaugh's bill. Apart from Beck's motives, which were as questionable as Digby's mercenary services to the Congress, his argument in a way portrayed Muslim reaction to the bill. Arguing on the line of his mentor, he pointed out that in an elective system, the rights of Muslim minority would be endangered in the same manner as had happened in case of municipal elections. In Allahabad, out of 19 members, only one was a Muslim even though Muslims numbered 43,500 out of a total of 148,500. He exposed the catch in Congress proposal that the proportion of elected members for a particular community should bear the same proportion to the total elected members as obtained among Hindu and Muslim populations. The Congress proposal for minority representation was inadequate and deceptive for the simple reason that only "the true representative elected by his own community could represent the feelings and interests" of his people.[1] Otherwise Sir Syed, would have no chance to be elected, and Congress proteges like Muhammad Ali Bhimji would be elected by the Congress to represent Muslims.

In the meantime, Sir Syed acted promptly to counteract the Congress campaign launched for the purpose of direct appeal to the Muslim masses. He sent out groups of students from Aligarh[2] to various towns to warn[1] Muslims against the supporters of Bradlaugh's bill who were ultra Hindus like Tilak[3] and the proponents of the anti-cow-slaughter movement. By employing students for his anti-Congress campaign, Sir Syed set into motion a force which grew into a major instrument of Muslim political struggle during the Khilafat and Muslim League movements. Sir Syed has been maligned by some later writers[4] for having confused the issue of reform with the anti-cow-slaughter movement. But his detractors conveniently overlook the fact that the question of cow slaughter was no longer confined to the optional propriety of foregoing the killing of kine in deference to Hindu religious sentiment. Thanks to Hindu opposition, this issue got linked up with Muslim struggle for political rights. Muslim newspapers were already protesting against the anti-cow-slaughter riots and criticized the restrictions imposed by the local authorities in certain districts as "an unjust interference in the religious affairs of the Musalmans."[5] *Rafiq-i-Hind* and *Rahbar-i-Hind* blamed

1. *AIG*, 29 March 1890. By courtesy of Prof. Shaikh A. Rashid.

2. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-12.

3. B. G. Tilak was an ultra Hindu leader who despite his marked anti-Muslim stance was hailed not only by the orthodox Hindus but by the Congress as well.

4. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-12. See also Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

5. *Najm-ul-Akhbar*, Etawah, 24 January 1885, cited in *NWPNR, 1885*, IOL.

the Hindus of Lahore for engineering a riot during the Muharram.[1] *Rafiq-i-Hind* protested against the restrictions imposed by the Government on cow slaughter in Delhi and Hoshiarpur. Hindu attitude betrayed might was right otherwise they had no reason to ride rough shod over Muslim minority. The paper also observed:

> Such being the case, on what grounds can Musalmans claim equality with Hindus, and expect the Government to allow them to hold their religious ceremonies with the same liberty as the latter are permitted to do. Granted that the British Government has the same regard for both Hindus and Musalmans, still it cannot be expedient for it to displease the stronger community for the sake of the weaker.[2]

Hindus brought up the question of cow slaughter with 'unwonted urgency' as they had begun "to appreciate the importance which their numerical preponderance in the country allows them to assert."[3] In Hindu princely states restrictions on cow slaughter existed already, and now the Hindu majority was endeavouring to get them extended to British India. *Latif-ul-Akhbar* regretted that the Government had forbidden cow slaughter in Ludhiana. Though the Government made pledges of religious impartiality, it violated them with impunity.[4] *Rafiq-i-Hind* discussed at length the legal and political aspects of the anti-cow-slaughter movement.[5] In this context, Sir Syed was more than justified in linking up reform of the Councils with the anti-cow-slaughter movement, and thereby bringing the tyranny of majority rule to the comprehension of a common Muslim. He was successful in obtaining 20,735 signatures on a petition which he sent to the Parliament.[6]

At the same time, Nawab Abdul Latif took the lead on behalf of the Mahomedan Literary Society, and submitted a petition to the Secretary of State for India.[7] He sent its copy to Sir John Gorst.[8] Later, Sir Richard Temple placed the same position before the House of Commons.[9]

1. *Rafiq-i-Hind* and *Rahbar-i-Hind*, Lahore 17 October 1885, cited in *Ibid.*
2. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 17 September 1887, cited in *NWPNR 1887.*
3. *The Pioneer Mail*, Allahabad, 1 February 1888, IOL.
4. *Latif-ul-Akhbar*, Gorkhpur, 23 September 1887, cited in *NWPNR 1887.*
5. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, 6 July, 1889.
6. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 312.
7. From Nawab Abdul Latif to the Chief Secretary Government of Bengal, 1 April 1890, *Letters From India, J & P, 1890*, Vol. 12, p. 485, IOL.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Petition presented by Sir Richard Temple, 3 May 1890. App. 98. Appendix to the Eighth Report", *Public Petitions*. By courtsey of the Librarian of the Library of the House of Commons, London.

The Mahomedan Literary Society claimed to be "the earliest educational and political organization" of the orthodox Muslims of India, and criticized the joint electorate :

> That your Petitioners especially desire to express satisfaction at the omission of any elective principle from the said Bill, in as much as, owing to the peculiar religious and social circumstances of India, the country is not yet fit for the exercise of such privileges, and it is their firm belief that should election form the basis of any portion of the contemplated legislation on the subject of Indian Councils, the Mahomedan community, though numbering some fifty millions, will be at the mercy of a strong and compact Hindu majority, whose notions of right and expediency are so different in many vital points from these entertained by the Mahomedans.[1]

It was also pointed out that Muslims could not benefit from the elective system, due to their backwardness in 'English education and political organization', and even if they did succeed in having "a certain number of representatives, their numerical proportion could never be strong enough to ensure a due regard to their vital interests."[2] In the end, they pleaded that the Government of India should retain the responsibility "to make such selections for the several councils in India as, under proper safeguards, they may consider right and proper in the interests of the various nationalities."[3]

Khan Bahadur Sheikh Ghulam Hasan, President of Anjuman-i-Islamya, Amritsar took the initiative in persuading the Indian Patriotic Association and the Central National Mahomedan Association to adopt a uniform stand on the question of Muslim representation in Councils. He maintained :

> About two months ago the Anjuman-i-Islamya of Amritsar passed a resolution to the effect that petitions from different parts of India be submitted to Parliament to protest against Mr. Bradlaugh's bill for extension of Indian Legislative Councils on the principle of election. To accomplish the object I had to correspond with Sir Syed Ahmad, Secretary to the Indian Patriotic Association and the Hon'ble Syad [sic], Amir Hasan, Secretary to the Central Mahomedan Association, Calcutta. After mature deliberations we are agreed upon forwarding three different memorials adopted by the Patriotic Association, the Central Mahomedan Association and the Anjuman-i-Islamya respectively. The Mahomedans of Bengal will be represented by the Central Association. The signatories of the petition got up by the Patriotic Association will not be confined to any province. The

1. *Ibid.* 2. *Ibid.* 3. *Ibid.*

> Mahomedans of the Punjab will adopt the memorial prepared by this Anjuman.[1]

Obviously Muslims of India had evolved a common strategy to secure constitutional guarantee for their rights. The Muslim Associations rose above provincial and regional considerations for the sake of their common political destiny. Muslims of Bengal, the Punjab, N.W. Provinces, and other provinces stood united in their common apprehensions and aspirations. The Anjuman-i-Islamya drafted a petition which was adopted with slight modifications by the Anjuman-i-Islamya, Punjab, Lahore and on their behalf presented by James Maclean to the House of Commons. The Anjuman-i-Islamya, Punjab emphasized :

> That the proceedings of the Fifth Congress held at Bombay have brought matters to such a pass that your Petitioners are afraid, if at this critical time, they merely rest contented by ventilating their grievances through their public organs without making any attempt to bring them directly to your kind notice, the public peace and interests are sure to suffer.[2]

The Anjuman pointed out that Bradlaugh's resolution did not enjoy any support from fifty million Muslims of India except for those twenty persons who had signed his petition. It reiterated the argument that India was a congeries of diverse nationalities, religions and cultures. Hindu-Muslim differences over the question of language and slaughter of kine had further strained their relations. The Anjuman expressed its apprehensions about Hindu communalism which had been heightened by Western concepts of nationalism and democracy.

> But your Petitioners submit that the educated Hindus are the bitterest and most formidable political enemies of the Mahomedans at large. Many Hindu leaders have at times advised the Mahomedans to leave the country bag and baggage, and have loudly declared 'India for Hindus.'[3]

Since hostile Hindu attitude left little room for political accommodation of Muslim minority, the Parliament was urged not to be indifferent to the welfare of fifty million Muslims. The Anjuman feared that the elective

1. Khan Bahadur Sheikh Ghulam Hasan to the Private Secretary to His Honour the Lt. Governor of the Punjab, 6 April 1890, File No. 283, *Home/General 'B' Proceedings*, PRO Lahore.

2. Petition presented by Mr. James Maclean, 13-19 June 1890, App. 169. Appendix, "The Thirteenth Report", *Public Petitions*, Library of the House of Commons.

3. *Ibid.*

principle "would place them and other minorities in an almost intolerable subjection"[1] to the Hindu majority. The Anjuman pleaded for the retention of system of nominations which stood as the only means of safeguarding Muslim rights. Muslims had resorted to nominations as the only practicable solution of their political difficulties. The petition of the United Indian Patriotic Association also ran on similar lines, and stressed that Muslims "although only one-fifth of the inhabitants of India, are the single largest community" of fifty millions who were distinguished for their traditions of 'bravery and intelligence', and as such 'the Indian Mahomedan nation is a factor of great importance in Indian politics'.[2] The petition sought to prove the unsuitability of elective system in relation to the Muslim position in India.

> That inasmuch as the Indian Mahomedans are not confined like the nationalities of Europe to any special locality, but are dispersed throughout India among the multitude of other races and castes inhabiting the continent, they are in most parts of India in a considerable minority, and that therefore in any system of election they must of necessity be outvoted. Overwhelming proof of this is furnished by the existing municipalities. It may be safely said that in the event of a popular agitation appealing to the religious sentiments of the people, such for example as the agitation now afloat to prohibit cow-killing,... scarcely a single Mahomedan member representing Mahomedan sentiment could be returned.[3]

Emphasizing that since proportionate representation could not afford protection to Muslim interests, and as the matters would be decided by a "simple majority" in the Councils, the system of nomination should be retained for Muslims. The petitioners appealed to the House of Commons, that they "should not be led into supposing by the amount of noise and stir produced by the National Congress party that the quantity and quality of native opinion opposed to it is insignificant or uninfluential."[4] Thus Sir Syed projected the consensus of Muslim public opinion in the petition which was signed by 21,162 persons.[5] Despite their backwardness, Muslims did make a fair showing in their representations. Assuming that all the petitions in favour of elective system were submitted by Hindus and all the petitions against it were sent by Muslims, the following picture would

1. Petition presented by Sir Richard Temple, 16 May 2 June 1890, App. 144, Appendix, "The Eleventh Report", *Public Petitions*, Library of the House of Commons.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

emerge:[1]

Session	*Subject*	*Total No. of Petitions*	*Total No. of Signatures*
1890	In Favour	748	3,94,946
,,	Against	3	45,896
,,	For Alteration	20	37
1890/91	In Favour	19	9,337
1892	Nil	Nil	Nil

No doubt, the Muslim Associations were united in seeking protection for Muslim rights, through nominations, their action would seem to be incompatible with the natural demands of a separate Muslim nationhood to which they aspired. Since they were not thinking in terms of a nation state, their action was neither illogical, nor unrealistic. In fact, they had begun re-discovering their nationhood in a new political context, and the national sentiment had not become so powerful a factor as to exclude temporary expedients and even not too dignified compromises. Lack of political organization and economic weakness had obliged them to accept nominations which were a temporary expedient and not the goal. Since Sir Syed, and his allies, the Anjuman-i-Islamya, Punjab had shot down the emergence of an independent Muslim political organization with a democratic outlook, Muslims had to suffer traumatic failure in the local bodies elections. Now they had to cling ever more to the Government. No wonder then if the nominations were sought for by Muslims and conceded on a restricted scale by the Congress. Even the Indian National Congress had favoured partial application of the system of nominations. From 1887 to 1889 it repeatedly asked for 50 per cent elected members who were to be elected as a result of indirect elections.[2] After all, nominations were considered by the Government, by the Congress, and by the Muslims as one of the constitutional devices to give protection to the minorities. In fact, nominations made by the Government were no substitute for separate Muslim electorate. As an alternative CNMA wanted the nominations to respond to Muslim electorate and preferably to originate with Muslims. But in view of broader consensus it decided not to take a different stand which would have weakened the Muslim case. Ameer Ali attached greater importance to fragile Muslim unity than to separate electorate cherished more as an ultimate and not an immediate goal. But after his elevation to the bench

1. These figures were supplied by the Librarian, Library of the House of the Commons.

2. Pattabhi B. Sitaramaya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Madras 1935, pp. 36-7.

of Calcutta High Court[1] in December 1889, he opted to fade out of the Muslim political scene at a time when Muslims needed his leadership the most. Syed Ameer Husain, his successor to the secretaryship of the Central National Mahomedan Association was not as dynamic as Ameer Ali had been. Soon after the Association began to languish,[2] and failed to project the demand for separate electorate, when the bill for the reform of Councils was being discussed in India, and debated in the Parliament in England.

The Muslim Associations were able to attract the attention of some influential members of the Parliament who presented Muslim point of view to the Parliament. Earl of Northbrook despite his pro-Congress sympathies was constrained to admit the fact of Muslim opposition to the Congress in his speech on the Indian Councils Bill,[3] on 6 March 1890. In the same debate, the Earl of Kimberley said :

> But this does not entail that there are no Bodies in India whose opinion it would be desirable to have. For example, there is a most important body which you would have to deal with, the Mohammedans of India. If you were to be guided entirely by the Hindoo popular opinion you would find yourself in a great difficulty. .. We do not know how the Mohammedan and Hindoo populations if placed face to face with each other in elective representative government would view each other; but we know, at all events that one of the heaviest responsibilities and severest duties of the Government of India is to prevent the outbreak of hostilities caused by profound differences between these two communities, differences in race, traditions, history and creed.[4]

Obviously the protests and petitions of the Muslim Associations received considerable attention during the debates on the Indian Councils Bill. In a debate in the House of Lords in 1890, Lord Salisbury, "echoing the addresses of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan laid stress on the radical and acrid differences between Hindu and Mohammedan, . . .held that the chief need was for a fuller representation of all interests.'[5] In the meantime, the Muslim Associations kept on a steady flow of petitions, and between 1890 to 1892 submitted as many as 748 petitions to the British Government. J. Maclean, M. P., in a debate on 28 March 1892, said :

1. Lansdowne to Cross, 17 December 1889, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, LAC.*
2. *Moslem Chronicle*, 3 October 1903, IOL.
3. *Hansard*, 6 March 1890, Vol. CCCXLII, pp. 97-99, IOL.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
5. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, p. 544.

> I have myself presented several petitions to the House, and so has the Hon'ble Member for Worcestershire, from most enlightened Mahomedan bodies in India protesting against any concession being made to this National Congress movement. The Hindoos are the majority people in India, and it is only natural that the Mahomedans should be afraid of what might happen to themselves if they were governed by a Legislative body containing a majority of men bitterly opposed to them in race and religion.[1]

On the same day, Richard Temple participating in the discussion on the IndianCouncil's Amendment Bill, gave expression to the Muslim demands:

> I have myself submitted representations on their behalf and have promised to watch their interests in reference to this Bill. .. They know that they form a very important and influential section of the community, and they say according to the scheme of the National Congress, an undue share of power would accrue to that Congress, which consists almost entirely of Hindoos and Parsees. .. The Mahomedans say that they would be outvoted by the Hindus in every place, and they naturally wish to maintain some influence in the country. .. They ask, in effect that there should be some arrangement for the proper representation of their important minority, which may now be numbered at between 50,000,000 and 60,000,000. This question of proportional representation alone shows how hard and onerous the elective system must be in such a country.[2]

Muslim thinking on separate Muslim electorate was amply reflected in Temple's speech.

The petitions of Muslim Associations did not go unheeded, for the British Government was constrained to take notice of their demands at the highest level. Cross asked Lansdowne that since the Bill had been passed, how did he "propose to get recommendations from the great Mahomedan community ?"[3] It was considered necessary in view of the fact that new rules and regulations had to be drafted for the practical application of the Bill. Lansdowne suggested that the Muslim representation could be provided by nominations and contemplated that in certain cases 'a Mahomedan society or organization, to recommend a member.'[4] Cross conceded that the nominations should be "the main responsibility

1. *Hansard*, 28 March 1892, Vol. III, p. 86, IOL.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
3. Cross to Lansdowne, 6 May 1892, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, LAC.*
4. Lansdowne to Cross, 31 May 1892, *Ibid.*

of the Governor-General and the Governors," but advised him to work out the rules and regulations in such a way as to secure "a fair representation of the Mohammedans."[1] The Queen also expressed her solicitude for Muslim representation and impressed upon Lansdowne the "importance of securing an adequate representation of the great body of the Mahomedans."[2] At the same time Cross reminded Lansdowne, 'I presume that you will find some means by which the Mahomedans will be able to suggest some of their own folk for your nomination, as perhaps the members of a corporation etc. etc. may suggest others for your nomination.'[3] It would appear that Cross was willing to harmonize nominations with the elective character of Muslim representatives. But now Lansdowne had changed his views, and seemed determined to exercise nominations as an act of authority without reference to the popular character of the Muslim members. Had Muslims been more assertive in their demand, perhaps they would have obtained at least a semblance of separate electorate. After all, Muslim faith in British goodwill had not taken them very far on the path of political rights. Lansdowne conveyed to the Queen his readiness "to bear in mind what Majesty has said with regard to the Mahomedan community," and assured her that the direct nominations "will afford one means of securing proper representation for Mahomedan interests."[4] Lansdowne informed Cross about the Queen's letter.[5] Soon after, Cross approved draft rules and regulations by which the Government could determine "the character that shall be given to the representation of the views of different races, classes, localities."[6] It was also stipulated that, "where associations have been established upon a substantial community of legitimate interests, professional, commercial or territorial", these could be consulted by the Government at its discretion for "the selection of members in whose qualifications they may be disposed to confide."[7] Obviously, the basis of consultation was changed in a way that had no relevance to the demands

1. Cross to Lansdowne, 2 June 1892, *Ibid.*

2. Queen Empress to Lansdowne, 2 June 1892, *Correspondence with the Queen Empress, LAC.*

3. Cross to Lansdowne, 9 June 1892, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, LAC.*

4. Lansdowne to the Queen Empress, 27, June 1892, *Correspondence with the Queen Empress, LAC.*

5. Lansdowne to Cross, 28 June 1892, *Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, LAC.*

6. Cross to Lansdowne, 30 June, 1892, *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

and rights of Indian communities. In giving practical shape to this retrograde step, Lansdowne decided that in case of Muslims and other minorities, "nominations pure and simple without a previous recommendation from a constituency of any kind, will of course, be the best safeguard."[1] Muslim were thus deprived of the fruits of their protracted efforts. Though the Government had contrived to dilute and downgrade Muslim representation to nominated members from different classes and interests, the fact remains, even this clause would not have been inscribed in the Statute Book but for the exertions of Muslims as a whole. Though not too bright a signpost, it marked the future direction of Muslim politics.

Facts leave little room for doubt that separate Muslim representation was a positive demand and an organic growth. But still this issue has been made the subject of controversy. In explaining the genesis of representation by classes and interests Dr. Ambedkar has preferred speculation to investigation. He surmised :

> It is a mystery as to who was responsible for its introduction. This scheme of separate representation was not the result of any demand put forth by any organized Muslim Association. In whom did it originate then ? It is suggested that it originated with the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin,. .. Curiosity leads to a further question namely what could have led Lord Dufferin to propose such a plan ? It is suggested that the idea was to wean away the Musalmans from the Congress which had been started three years before. Be that as it may, it is certain that is by this Act that separate representation for Muslims became, for the first time, a feature of the Indian Constitution.[2]

Ram Gopal has insinuated that the British had instigated Muslims to take a stand on separate Muslim representation. He comments :[3]

> There was some meaning in the simultaneous anti-Congress agitation among Muslims in Northern India, in the Bombay Presidency and in Bengal, without an organization and without an all-embracing leadership; there was some meaning in Dufferin thinking in terms of communal representation for Muslims in 1888, when Muslims from different parts of the country, participating in the Congress a few months before under the presidentship of an eminent Muslim made no mention of such demand.

Many pro-Congress writers, for obvious reasons ascribe separate Muslim

1. Lansdowne to Cross, 5 July 1892, *Ibid,*

2. B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, Bombay, 1945, p. 240. He was the leader of the Untouchable community, and become the first Law Minister of Bharat.

3. R. Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

representation to British inspiration emanating from Dufferin and Lansdowne etc. An other school following Hume and Tufail Manglori have accused Muslim Associations of being the hand maidens of British administration which had raised the bogey of Hindu hegemony to scare away Muslims from Indian nationalism. With equal force some Muslim critics retort that Indian nationalism was a product of British imperial domination and the Indian National Congress was promoted by Dufferin, Hume and Bradlaugh. The Congress owed its popularity among the British to its wholesale imitation of British political ideas. On a dialectal level, such assumptions would appear to be the product of Hindu-Muslim confrontation which still continues to colour historical literature. Nevertheless to portray Muslim separatism as the product of British policy of *divide et impera*, amounts to an unfavourable projection. To dub Muslim national struggle as an artificial process devoid of positive values and sense of political direction smacks of propaganda and cannot be taken as history. Such slanted interpretations, with less reason and greater prejudice, depict the growth of Muslim nationhood as a spurious phenomenon, and reduce Muslim organizations and leaders to the position of pawns in the British imperial designs in India. Not only it injures Muslim national pride, but also misguides the unwary international opinion about the genesis of Muslim freedom movement in South Asia. Now it has been amply demonstrated in the discussion above, that all the Muslim organizations took a positive and unanimous stand on this issue. Fifty-four branches of the United Indian Patriotic Association, sixty-nine branches of the Central National Mahomedan Association spread all over India, the Mahomedan Literary Society, Anjuman-i-Islamya, Amritsar, and the Anjuman-i-Islamya Punjab, Lahore, and a host of Muslim Associations and individuals who signed the petitions had expressed their mistrust of the working of the elective principle, and had demanded separate Muslim representation. Overwhelming contemporary evidence vindicates this conclusion beyond any shadow of doubt. Hence it is tendentious to suggest that separate Muslim nominations were a concession to wean away the Muslims from the Congress. Long before the formulation of their demand on this subject? Muslims had rejected the Congress in 1886. Not a sop, nominations fell short of Muslim popular demand. Those who refuse to acknowledge Muslim national sentiment in this struggle resemble the proverbial bat which declared at noontide, "where is the sun ? I cannot see it." Awareness of separate Muslim rights even though inadequately achieved, was a significant achievement symbolizing dynamism of nascent Muslim nationalism and a manifestation of a new national purpose. By 1892, the seeds of separate

Muslim representation had been sown well and deep by the selfless zeal and untiring energy of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali. But it was not till 1909 that their efforts bore fruit. The Simla Delegation was not the prelude to separate Muslim representation, as is commonly supposed, but a climax of the political process which had begun to unfold during the momentous eighties of the 19th century.

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(*b*) **Collections to Judicial and Legislative Letters Received from India**

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INDEX

ERRATA

p. 42, line 29 for Sir Sye, *read* Sir Syed.

p. 43, line 4 for equalitarian, *read* egalitarian.

p. 73, line 32 *delete* Sir, before Surendranath Banerjea.

p. 87, line 18 *add* the, before Civil Service

p. 109, line 8, 13 for Minto, *read* Mayo.

p. 134, line 8 for Fawcott, *read* Fawcetts.

p. 155, line 14 for Backwardness, *read* backwardness.

p. 157, line 7 for Masrassah, *read* Madrassah.

p. 182, line 1 for non-endorsed, *read* now endorsed.

p. 182, line 2 for and challenged, *read* who challenged.

p. 186, line 10 for Natson, *read* Nateson.

p. 186, footnote 2 for Natsan, *read* Nateson.

p. 249, line 12, 13 for Ali Mohammad Bhimji, *read* Mohammad Ali Bhimji.

p. 253, line 29 for batteries against, *read* batteries on.

p. 278, line 25 for C.P. Local Self Government, *read* C.P. Local Self-government Bill.

p. 282, line 16 for political obligation own to obtain, *read* political obligation to obtain.

p. 258, 297, 298, line 2, 20, 27 for anti-cow Slaughter Movement, *read* Anti-Cow Slaughter Movement.

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